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FACTORS IN THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE LUVALE

C. M. N. WHITE *

SYNOPSIS

The present account is the first to be prepared giving an outline of the social organization of the Luvale (or Lwena) of north western Northern Rhodesia and adjacent areas of Angola. The clans, matrilineal kinship unit, social distance within the latter, secondary patrilineal affiliations and links created by marriage, factors determining residence of the individual, tribal factors making for cohesion, and friendship contracts, are discussed. Considerable use of Luvale aphorisms is introduced to show how various features of Luvale society appear to the Luvale themselves and it is suggested that these are a useful supplement to bare structural analysis. The implications of marriage in relation to social organization are considered, and modern developments in them described. It is suggested in conclusion that although certain factors formerly important in social organization are losing their importance to-day, it would be wrong to regard social organization as a whole as decaying. It is rather adapting itself to modern conditions; the conflicting forces of cohesion and fission have always been strong in Luvale society, and through them and the egalitarian and individualistic attributes of the Luvale, society to-day is well placed to adapt itself to the sweeping social and economic revolution taking place in Central Africa.

The present description of Luvale social organization is based on data gathered in the Balovale and Kabompo districts of Northern Rhodesia. The Luvale may be described as a matrilineal people with little in the way of a centralised political organization ; originally they were an agricultural and fishing people but for many years have had contact with cattle-owning neighbours and in consequence have owned a small number of cattle themselves. They are not however in any respect a pastoral people. Their economic sense is highly developed, a trait which can be traced back to their early contact with the Ovimbundu trading caravans, and to-day they themselves are active as traders.

In so far as their early history can be ascertained, they are one of the many Central African tribes who claim an origin from the dispersal of leaders from Mwachiamvwa ; in the case of the Luvale their traditional founder was a certain Ndalamuhitanganyi. He is said to have found people on the Lwena river in Angola who were neither agriculturalists nor pastoral but lived by collecting water lily bulbs and catching fish. He brought them under his leadership and they became the Luvale. This is no doubt best interpreted as referring to a people who were originally chiefless and egalitarian in their political organization until a dynasty claiming origin from Mwachiamvwa imposed itself upon them. But this

* Mr. C. M. N. White, formerly a District Officer in Northern Rhodesia, is now on the staff of the Secretariat in Lusaka. He has published numerous anthropological, linguistic and ornithological papers in various journals.

coming of chiefs did not destroy the essential basis of Luvale society which still remains essentially egalitarian.

The Social Organization

Two features of every man's life are determined at birth, his clan affiliation and his membership of his father's and his mother's kin-groups.

The Clan (muyachi)

I use the term "clan" to denote the groups which claim a historical origin from an original founder; the members of such a clan regard themselves as his descendants although they cannot trace any genealogical descent from the founder to-day. Every Luvale is a member of a clan and at least in the past regarded it as conferring a quasi-kinship affiliation with other clan members. The term "clan" for these groupings has been universally used in recent anthropological writings on Central African Bantu ; but it must not be confused with the term when applied in other parts of Africa to descent groups or extended kinship units which can trace an actual genealogical descent.

There are twelve clans distinguished by name and inherited matrilineally ; their characteristics are typical of similar clans in other Central African Bantu ; they are not localised territorially ; they have no common leader, their members are dispersed and never assemble together ; they have neither common lands nor common ritual ; they are exogamous. In the past they served to provide a means of help and hospitality between persons who were otherwise strangers. The Luvale have a saying that, "A Luvale does not trust his fellow because he is another Luvale but because he is a fellow clansman". In the past no doubt this mutual aid was very real ; cases are cited where clan members paid to buy out of slavery a fellow clansman although he was a stranger. Membership of a clan is identified by the recitation of a formula *(kumbu)* which refers to the traditional founder of the clan.

Membership of a clan was, and still is referred to as kinship *(usoko)* although to-day the clans fulfil little practical role in life. A certain amount of hospitality between clan members still goes on. Cases occur too where a stranger with no kinsman may determine his place to live by building where there are fellow clansmen, but strangers with no kinship ties living in this way are not very common. Most striking as a proof of the decay of clan affiliation to-day is the fact that the rule of exogamy between clan members is sometimes broken without any social consequences. Whilst it is still true that exogamy is normally followed between clansmen where the clan affiliation is known, marriages occur to-day between members of the same clan who did not know each other's clan membership at the time of marriage. Moreover this happens not only in the urban areas where it might be expected, but also in the rural areas of the Luvale homeland. Thus a young Luvale working as a teacher married a woman and only after the marriage the relatives of the woman discovered that both the man and his wife belonged to the same clan. Some of the older relatives of the woman protested that as the man was related to them by his clan membership, he had better give up the woman but he declined and everyone acquiesced in the situation. The exogamous feature of the clan is to-day the aspect of it which tends to be stressed most strongly by the older generation, but the younger people laugh at this, and point out that it is no longer absolutely observed. The clan to-day therefore plays a very small part in social organization.

Matrilineal Kinship

There is no specific term to define a matrilineal kingroup ; the term *usoko* is used for it, but *usoko* means no more than relationship and may be used for any type of kinship including patrilineal or by marriage or even to refer to clan membership. Such a group had no exactly fixed limits ; it was led by a senior member whose status was determined as much by his own personality as by any predetermined right of succession ; it was not localised in one place since Luvale marriages have always been virilocal and thus female members of the group would be dispersed in the various villages of their husbands. This matrilineal kinship group was perpetually

characterized by two conflicting forces of cohesion and dispersal. In the direction of cohesion it formed the core of any village, since a village commonly consists of a group of matrilineally related men under the headmanship of one of their number, together with their wives and children, and matrilineally related males or females not living elsewhere. It might also include a stranger or two who had built there on account of clan affiliations. In fact just as much a reason for his living there would very likely be the fact that he had married a female member of the group and had no matrikin of his own with whom to live with his wife. The Luvale commonly say that uxorilocal marriage is an indication that the husband has no acceptable kinsmen of his own with whom to live.

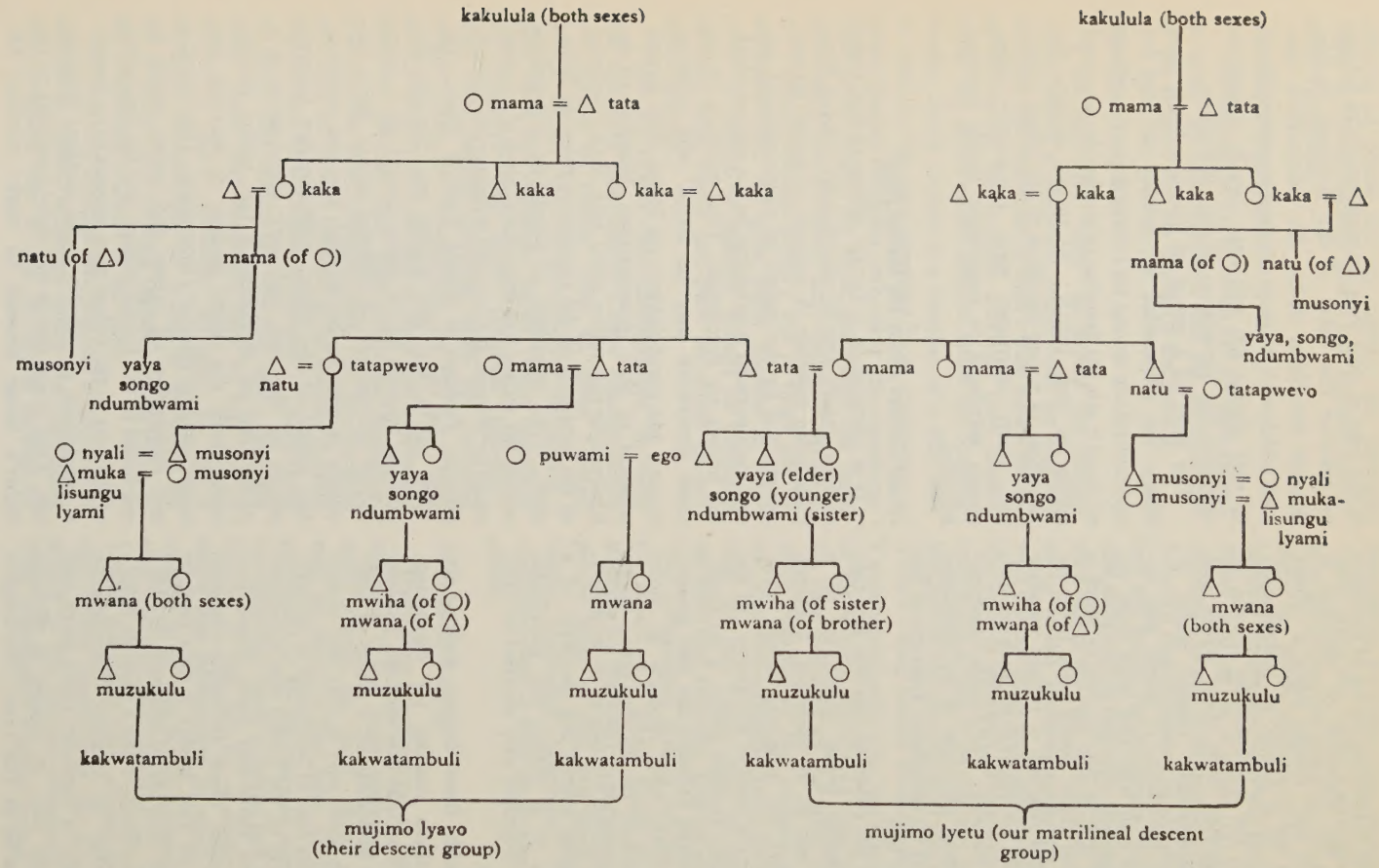
A factor making for cohesion was the fact that the matrilineal kinship group would act as a unit on behalf of one of its members. Disputes and litigation within the kingroup would commonly be settled by the head of the group ; in the case of a dispute with another group, if no agreement could be reached between the two groups, they might collectively have recourse to direct retaliation. Alternatively the kinship group might assume collective liability for one of its members. In addition, the group shared out property of a deceased member. It is within the matrilineal kinship group that a person may succeed to office or inherit property.

Side by side with these factors making for cohesion, went others making for disruption. Within the village especially this was true. Jealousy and rivalry for the leadership of a group of kinsmen played a prominent part in this and closely associated with it the fear of witchcraft or sorcery. Since the personality of the leader was all important, an unpleasant individual soon found that his following dispersed. These disruptive elements were very strong, so that to-day a man may be able to point to his matrilineal kinsmen in many widely scattered localities. Thus a man in Kabompo would be able to indicate ascertainable matrikin in Balovale, a hundred miles away and much further afield still, in Angola at perhaps Cazombo or even as far as Vila Luso. The dangers in the past of such long journeys no doubt helped to enhance the value of the fictitious kinship through the clans, whilst the comparative ease with which such journeys can now be accomplished to visit distant kin will have equally helped to minimize the importance of clan affiliations.

The head of a group of kinsmen living as a village was responsible for sharing out land for agricultural use among his followers ; in the sphere of ritual it was his function to invoke the ancestral spirits on their behalf ; he would arrange the marriages of young members of his village matrikin. Such marriages were commonly cross-cousin marriages to consolidate bonds between kinsmen.

Social distance within the kinship group

It is common in a Luvale village to find three or four generations of matrilineally related kinsmen living together. A measure of social distance determined by the nature of relationship of any two such persons is exhibited in the way in which the houses are juxtaposed. Thus brothers of the same generation may be found with adjacent houses, and grandchildren are found with houses adjacent to their grandparents. Members of the intervening generation avoid such close proximity to the members of the generation above or below them. This opposition of proximate generations within the village has been the subject of a recent study by Watson dealing with it among the Kaonde (*Human Problems in British Central Africa*, xv, 1954, pp. 1–30). But among the Kaonde the position appears to be characterized by a more formal recognition of differing status, since the village is said to be divided into two sections, one junior to the other, with separate meeting places for the two, and such observances as a prohibition on members of the junior section eating with the senior section, or entering the senior meeting place at a beer drink. This formalized recognition of junior and senior status is not found in the Luvale village, and the separation of the huts in the village plan appears to be merely a recognition of relative social distance between kin. Thus a son avoids too close proximity to his father's house because he might overhear his



LUVALE KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

father and mother within their house ; or might see them or be seen by them in a state of undresss He avoids too close a proximity to his mother's brother who can exercise authority over him and must be treated discretely and with respect. On the other hand his own brothers or cousins are on a more familiar level of relationship and he can live in close proximity to them. Grandchildren are on familiar terms of social contact with their grandparents and can therefore live in proximity to them. The most formalized type of social remoteness is that found in the avoidance between a son-in-law and his parents-in-law, and exhibited by the special separation of their huts in the village. This is not however a common situation in Luvale villages between a man and his wife's parents since marriages are virilocal in the majority of cases. It is more commonly exhibited by a woman and her husband's parents. The brother-in-law or sister-in-law relationship is the reverse and the familiar relations between them results in their houses being close together.

The social distance reflected in the village plan does not preclude alternate generations using the common village meeting place or eating together.

Social distance in a Luvale village may also be regarded as a reflection of the need to avoid quarrels between kinsmen since these are a common cause of the disruption of a village. The most extreme form of this social distance is the son-in-law and daughter-in-law / father-in-law and mother-in-law avoidance; avoidance is the most effective way of preventing quarrels. But where avoidance is not present there is always the chance of a quarrel.

The Luvale stress the danger of too constant close proximity between individuals being conducive to strained relations between them in a fable about the hare and the fowl. When the hare and the fowl formed a friendship contract, the fowl wanted the hare to come and live with him but the hare refused pointing out that this was the surest and quickest way of breaking up the friendship which would be much more enduring if they did not see too much of one another. Between proximate generations tensions may be reduced by a certain degree of separation in the village plan ; between the same or alternate generations familiarity serves to reduce tensions.

It may be questioned whether the Luvale have joking relations in the form commonly understood by that term. There are no inter-tribal joking relations of the type which are common in some parts of Africa ; indeed among the Luvale and kindred tribes the only joking relationship of that type is the one found between the Ndembu and Kosa groups of Lunda. The verb *seseka* which denotes familiarity and freedom to indulge in coarse jesting without offence is used of the easy relationships between kinsmen but these do not extend to the licence to appropriate each others property such as occurs in some tribes. No form of *usese* (familiarity) is formalized in this way between clans. The Luvale recognize that respect is required towards relatives of the first ascending generation, whilst familiarity and equality is normal between persons of the same generation and alternate generations ; and that these relations are conducive to maintaining the social equilibrium in the village. But they find some difficulty in equating their own realization of these inter-relations of social distance with the more pronounced types of joking relationship which occur in certain other tribes.

Other kinship affiliations

In addition to his primary link with his matrilineal kinsmen, every individual also has a secondary link with the matrilineal kin of his father. He or his own matrilineal kin might turn to them for additional help in a time of need or in prosecution of a feud. Again if he fell out with his matrilineal kindred, he could turn to his patrilineal kindred and join them instead.

Secondly, marriage creates additional kinship links. Some of these are impermanent like the relationship between a man and his wife which could be dissolved by the death of a spouse or by divorce. Although the children under matrilineal succession belong to their mother's kinship group, they have the secondary affiliation with their father's group as noted above, so that the custody of children did not create any problem, and does not as a rule to-day when it is common

to find the children of a dissolved marriage spending part of their time with their father and part with their mother.

Although by Luvale custom, a man or his wife avoids their mother-in-law and father-in-law, this does not apply to brothers-in-law or sisters-in-law. On the contrary the status of *unyali* (brother- or sister-in-law) is a permanent one. Hence the Luvale say "a marriage may be dissolved, but the relationship of *unyali* is indissoluble". The significance of this last fact was still greater in the past when marriages were commonly arranged and cross-cousin marriage favoured.

Aphorisms relating to kinship

As might be expected numerous aphorisms stress the importance of kinship and a few examples will serve to illustrate this point.

(a) *Watwama nakawa keshi kwingila mumukulilako.* A man with a dog does not go into a thicket to drive out the game from it. (i.e. he relies on his dog).

Often applied to the advantage of having kinsmen ; a man will not do so well in isolation as with the extra help of kinsmen.

(b) *Kulumbwangila chapembe, ngombe ali nakafunga.* A goat wanders aimlessly, an ox has a herdsman to look after it.

Akin to the last ; a man without kin is lost and without support when he gets into difficulties ; but one with kinsmen can depend upon them when in trouble.

(c) *Usoko kutohwa, tuwulande sengo yakasenda.* Kinship is an important thing, you wouldn't buy it with the horn of a Blue Duiker.

Stresses the importance of kinship ; a trifle like the small horn of a Blue Duiker is as nothing in comparison ; do not upset a kinsman for you cannot find another to replace him with ease.

(d) *Chalema kutumbwisa, kwonda kumbila mujila.* A present given to a kinsman or friend is of some account, the hire of a prostitute is money thrown away.

Self-explanatory on the need to cultivate friends and relatives.

(e) *Kamenemene kaTumba umenekele mukwenu umwande milonga.* Tumba's greeting : if you go and greet your friend, you can help him if he is in difficulty.

A man must keep contact with a friend or kinsman if he is to fulfil the aim of helping each other when need arises.

(f) *Kusema kulikula, pembe alikulile mwanenyi.* Begetting is a means of redemption, the goat redeems itself by its offspring.

Children will help their parents in time of need, just as the old goat was going to be killed for meat but instead its young was killed for the pot.

(g) *Lisa lyamungundu lyalikalu kulivingila, mwana nginga wamukalu kumulela.* Bulrush millet left in an old garden is difficult to protect from the birds and so too it is difficult for one without kinsmen to find any one to look after him.

* * *

Moreover since the village itself represents a nucleus of matrilineally related kin, it may be said that proverbs which relate initially to the uncertain stability of the village are further a commentary on the extent to which the real effectiveness of kinship ties may be tenuous. The instability of the village above mentioned may be illustrated by :

(a) *Kajila wahya mukanwa kutunga uswa chamuhona.* A bird which makes too much chattering never builds a nest.

A man who is always finding fault or criticizing others will never get a following nor a talkative woman an enduring marriage.

(b) *Kufwa chauta miwi kulimwangila.* When the bow is broken, the arrows get scattered (thrown away).

The personality of the individual headman alone binds the village together.

(c) *Chipalapala chivambuka chikuma nachituwa mundeho.* A scraper that is too sharp will put a hole through the pot.

Too much fault-finding will ruin the village.

(d) *Mutwe wakai kungulwilo lyamihinyi.* The duiker's head is the place where the axe handles gather.

Popularity is what counts in getting people around one.

(e) *Omu twavukile muhafu tuli hamwe, hakupakuka chamuhafu owu nakwenyi owu nakwenyi.* Whilst we were cutting the *muhafu* tree we were all together, but once it had fallen each went his own way.

The death of a headman results in dispersal of a village for it was his personality which kept people together.

Factors determining residence

Within the structure of Luvale society a man has a number of possible choices for his place of residence. These may be :

(a) At a village of his matrilineal-kin. This would normally be his first choice since it is to his matrilineal kin that he looks first and it is within this group that he may inherit office.

(b) At a village of his father or patrilineal kin—a less common situation implying more often than not a break with his matrilineal kin since his patrilineal kin form a secondary form of support, if his matrilineal kin are not available.

(c) At his wife's village : an unusual situation commonly interpreted as indicating a lack of his own kinsmen.

(d) At a village of which he is headman, if he can find sufficient relatives to join him.

(e) Increasingly to-day there is the possibility of an individual dwelling on his own, especially if he is a successful trader who can afford to lean less on the help or support of relatives which to-day is most important in the form of money.

His choice of these possible residences was and still is very largely determined by the congenial nature of the people among whom he lives, especially that of the village head, but by no means only so, since a suitable social equilibrium is necessary between all members of a village community. A number of Luvale proverbs will serve to illustrate what are regarded as undesirable or desirable social qualities which affect the compatibility of a man with his fellows. The proverbs selected are concerned with general qualities of character important in the individual's contacts with his fellow, and secondly with the fear of witchcraft as a disruptive force in the village.

(a) *Katenga kamaji afuko kulya chiwahe kwambulula chipihye.* If a little measure of *fuko* oil is nice when you eat it, you must not speak of it as nasty, i.e. do not be hypocritical.

(b) *Kuyema chihone mundeho, uchivwile muchala ?* If you find no good flavour in the pot, will you find it under your finger nail ?

Saying the contents of the pot have poor flavour does not fit with sucking your finger to get what is left under your finger nail after eating. Do not be two-faced or hypocritical.

(c) Together with this injunction to be honest in one's own words, goes a warning not to be taken in by superficial appearances in others.

Kulonga chamitondo hahasuku. The trees seem in line at a distance (but not when you get close).

(d) *Kau yoma, mutulo yituta.* The *kau* bulb is dry but inside is moist and fresh.

(e) *Kashima kaluku kanaholo helu, mutulo muli liyena.* The mush of bulrush millet is outwardly cold but it is hot inside.

Mistrust thus seems to be a dominant feature of Luvale society for the aphorisms warn the individual simultaneously to avoid creating mistrust by his own hypocrisy and yet advise him to be mistrustful of others. Perhaps for this reason a sense of moderation and proportion is strongly emphasized.

(f) *Kututa chikuma kulovoka kuchana.* If you run too far, you will come out on the plain. (The Luvale area includes large expanses of uninhabited plains).

(g) *Umbile ndongo, unukise mukumbo ?* Would you throw away the needle and sew with a bodkin ?

(h) *Wahungumuka umbululu, waseza tato, utute mulizulu.* The good-for-nothing honey-fly, it leaves the honey flowers and goes looking for honey to gather in someone's nostril.

A reference to the little stingless bees which cluster round one's eyes and nose ; it makes honey but seems to spend much time ignoring the obvious sources of honey.

(i) *Owu navasuma kuli linoka alitambukile,*

oloze owu navasuma kuli kazeze vamuveleke. When one bitten by a snake can walk unaided, would they have to carry one bitten by a ground-cricket.

(j) Two other proverbs stress the virtue of keeping to the point and not being led off into irrelevancy ; in particular with reference to one's kinsmen and friends, they are used to stress that if one has a ground for complaint against one individual, it will do no good to drag in others who are not in fact concerned.

Useze mwaya mukewe, ukakachile lilengacha ? Would you give up following the Brown Parrot and go after the large Green Parrot ?

(k) *Tutalenu hakuhanga kai, kanda natulitala kumalambuko.* Let us keep our eyes on the pursuit of the duiker, and not be looking at each other's testicles (which may be exposed in the excitement of the hunt).

(l) Following these same general lines is a warning against exaggeration :

Zala kayikolo mukahwa, kaha mujimo ngachilihi chipwe nayitesa hali ? If hunger gave one a pain in the arm-pit, what would it be like in the stomach !

(m) In a society of careless talk and mistrust, one should be careful of what one says in the hearing of others :

Hanjikila chana, musenge wazala vatu. You can speak freely on the plain, but the bush is full of people.

(n) So too, a small thing may have great consequences :

Unasungu mulinyawa unasangumuna vyavivulu. If you stir up a hole in tree, you provoke many things (i.e. insects and their larvae hiding in it).

(o) Life in a village leaves little privacy for one's actions so one should be circumspect.

Ufuku kaweshi kulya tujiko. The night does not eat excrement (If you should excrete outside your house during the night, it will still be there for all to see in the morning).

(p) *Chose vanatuku tuswa mingaji vanamono.* Wherever the flying termites emerge, the drongoes see them.

(q) In the midst of so many warnings, one should learn by the mistakes of others ;

Wina wafwa tetekeli, salanyima zangama. When the leader has fallen into a hole, the one behind should be on his guard.

(r) One may expect the consequences of one's conduct or disposition, for :

Chihengi kununa ukwechi chiyambi. A fat wart-hog has got a hunter (after him).

(s) In a society where the temptation is to be dissatisfied with one's surroundings and always to think of seeking another place which one may like better, it is advisable to count one's present blessings and not be too preoccupied with unfulfilled future possibilities.

Kai hachula, lambu hachula, kaha ngwavo tuyenu tukatale mwakupilwila uta, tukawanemo ika ? With a duiker and its skin on the bark tray, yet there are people urging us to go and look where we can shoot again – whatever for ?

(t) In traditional Luvale village life the most serious disrupting force was witchcraft and fear of it. Many proverbs refer to it.

Chikungulu kumushitu vishinganyeka kumbunge. An owl in the thicket brings apprehension to the heart.

Owls are regarded as often inhabited by the familiars of witches ; so once there is the rumour of a witch in the community, all are filled with fear.

(u) A single witch may destroy the community, hence :

Kakeya umwe apolesela tambo kuvula. One minnow going bad will spread putrifaction through the whole drying tray,

(v) or in more unequivocal language :

Kamungumba kamuchau kangumana ndulo, muloji wahembo angumana vatu. One little fish at the crossing can finish off my bait, and one witch in the village all my people.

(w) Hence one must always be vigilant :

Jimbo wengila wina matwitwi aseza haweluka. Even when the ant-bear is in his burrow, he leaves his ears outside.

(x) The great danger of witchcraft is that it may strike one from a quarter unsuspected ; the witch moves in secret. Friendly appearances of one's fellows may be a cloak for evil intentions.

Halihumbu lyakasolo hanafumu meso, muchima

kawafuminehoko. The honey-guide may be away from his wooded patch but he still knows where it is. (Honey-guides often show a predilection for a particular area of woodland).

(y) Witchcraft operates within the kinship group :

Usoko kumeso, kumuchima kuli kole. Overtly a kinsman but hatred in his heart.

(z) Since witches are often kinsmen, you may have to harden your heart against a close relative :

Mbumlubula chipwe puka vahamukono, kuvatota kukola, kuvaseza zala. A honey-fly or a bee on your leg; to chop out the honey will be painful but to leave it untouched means to suffer hunger.

(aa) In some cases mere spite on the part of a witch may bring disaster upon some unfortunate fellow villager, hence :

Kafwilefwile kafwile jiji hawala, wala kanu. The fly just died a death without any profit to himself on account of the beer, he did not drink the beer (Flies often drown themselves in beer).

(bb) But provoking another by some wrong you have done him is specially dangerous, lest he can take revenge upon you by witchcraft.

Unahokola uta wakapepe, chitela wahaka mufumbo. If you break the bow of one with familiar spirits, you have his enmity stored up against you.

(cc) Moreover the illwill of such a person may not fall upon you yourself but on another relative.

Likambwila lyamundumbi kamwafwile tuji, namufwa masu. A snare round the anus ; if it does not catch excreta it will catch urine.

(dd) Within the kinship group, a witch rarely attacks its own begotten children, but normally directs its evil powers to other kin :

Kawa kalasa kwenyi, kwamukwavo mwavatula. A dog licks its own private parts, but will bite off those of another dog.

(ee) Even if one has charms to avert witchcraft, one can never be sure that one's enemy is not too strong for them ; thus in the last resort the fear of witchcraft is always present and at the same time there co-exists a scepticism as far as one's own counter magic is concerned.

Kufwa kachakomoka wapanda, zala kayakomoka walimako. Death has no respect for the charm maker nor hunger for the cultivator.

If the proverbs quoted above are somewhat numerous, it is none the less hoped that they will have served their purpose in emphasizing that a structural analysis of Luvale society in terms of kinship is inadequate as a portrayal of the individual's place among his kinsmen. Behind the actual structure of kinship lies a complex mass of fears and standards of behaviour which form an essential part of the society. These elements though they can be studied by case histories or by a long observation of chosen villages, are often latent and not always easily perceived. Proverbs therefore serve as a very useful adjunct in clarifying some of their features.

Factors for cohesion outside kinship

Kinship, as seen from the foregoing paragraphs consists primarily in membership of a matrilineally related kingroup with a fictitious extension by means of matrilineally inherited clan membership. The cohesive effects of kinship affiliation were constantly counter-balanced by the disruptive effects of fission within the group which led to widespread dispersion. Under such conditions one might expect to find other elements serving to strengthen the structure of society. These may be considered under two heads.

(a) *Tribal factors:* The Luvale recognize themselves as a group which can be identified as against other groups and may be called a tribe. Nevertheless they have no specific term to denote a tribe, and call it *muyachi*, the same term which is applied to the clans. Thus, outside the strict limits of kinship, a more indefinite group identity existed. It could only be defined by the use of a common language and the limits of a weak political organization and common cultural features. One of these, the circumcision rites, is important, not in distinguishing the Luvale from their close allies, the Chokwe, Luchazi and Lunda, but in distinguishing them from other tribes who do not circumcise. In another paper *(African Studies*, 1953*)* I have pointed out the importance of this aspect of the circumcision rites. In addition to marking off the Luvale from non-circumcising tribes, the individuals who were circumcised together, were bound together by a special relationship outside

kinship, through common participation in the rites. It may be added that this element was only found in the male puberty rites, and not in those of females which are solitary. The rites of *mungongi* or *zemba* and their female counterpart *chiwila* had a similar significance outside the limits of kinship. Nevertheless the Luvale did not always place much reliance upon the fact of tribal identity as between individuals as may be deduced from the saying quoted in connection with the clans *(supra)* to the effect that one Luvale does not trust another because they are both Luvale.

(b) *Friendship compacts (usendo* or *usepa)* : These were and still are a very common feature of Luvale life, whereby two individuals, male or female, make a compact of mutual assistance, sealed by some exchange of goods or services. To-day money is the commonest medium of exchange in making such compacts. Access to the wife of a friend for sexual purposes is a feature of these compacts and need not involve reciprocal rights of access by the friend to the other's wife though it commonly does. To-day it is commonly said by the Luvale that the value of a friendship compact is greater than that of kinship, at once a commentary on the extent to which the effectiveness of kinship has declined, and a tribute to the power of money in an economic age among a very economically minded people.

Marriage

Since as described above Luvale marriages are virilocal from their inception, whilst succession and descent is matrilineal, a woman upon marriage will normally live away from her own matrilineal descent group, and her children although they belong to their mother's kingroup, will grow up in a village composed primarily of persons belonging to their father's matrilineal kin. Nonetheless it is to their mother's brother that her sons look as guardian and from whom they may inherit. Within this situation two forces may appear to operate in conflict – allegiance to a matrilineal descent group with which the child does not initially live, and residence and close association with the father's matrilineal group to which he does not primarily belong. These conflicting forces appear to be resolved somewhat differently according to the sex of the child. In the case of a boy he remains with his mother and father until he has reached the age of circumcision ; at this point he is regarded as grown up and can no longer sleep in his mother's house. At this stage he turns to his mother's brother who in the past would arrange his marriage, often a cross-cousin marriage, he would join his mother's brother's village. It must be remembered that in the past the age at which circumcision took place was higher than is usual to-day and that marriage took place soon after. Although, therefore, a male child remained longer at the village of his father, a very definite link with his matrilineal kin through his mother's brother's responsibilities in respect of his marriage was always before him. To-day children are circumcised at a much earlier age ; nonetheless if a child has reached an age where he no longer depends upon his mother's constant personal care, he will go and live at the village of his maternal uncle, although the need for, or possibility of, arranging his marriage is not yet an immediate necessity. On the one hand a male child's residence with his matrilineal kin commences at an earlier stage than formerly, and tends to emphasize his identity with it ; on the other hand this is counterbalanced to some extent by the fact that he will now prefer to choose his own wife rather than accept one chosen for him by his mother's brother.

The position of a female child is somewhat different ; like her brother she spends her time with her mother and father until she reaches the time of puberty; but in the past she would have been betrothed before puberty and married immediately afterwards.[1] Her physical links with her matrilineal descent group are therefore much less pronounced than those of her brother since as a child her only immediate link with it is her mother and after puberty she lives virilocally without any necessarily close contact with it. Her reunion with it comes late in life if she is widowed or divorced, and does not remarry. Then only she would return to live with her matrilineal kindred, usually

[1] Cf. WHITE : *Africa*, 1953, pp. 15–23, for an account of the female puberty rites and the place of betrothal and marriage in them.

with a brother ; and this would simultaneously give her the chance to be reunited with any male children who were already resident with their mother's brother. Marriage therefore plays a significant part in Luvale social structure in stressing the cohesion between male members of the matrilineal descent group but this cohesion is less emphasized as between its female members or between them and their male relatives. The male matrilineally linked group may therefore be regarded as the effective element in the Luvale matrilineal kin, whilst its female members are more peripheral and less closely and constantly linked to it. This disequilibrium between the male and female kin is somewhat redressed by the close relations of friendship and familiarity between a man and his brothers- and sisters-in-law, through whom he is enabled to maintain close contact with his sister.

Consequently to-day the maternal uncle remains a focal point for the residential grouping of the male matrilineally linked kin, although certain of his powers in respect of them have declined such as his regular function of arranging his nephews' marriages. It may be added too that, in the past, a maternal uncle exercised his power over his nephews by his right to pawn them or give them in slavery in satisfaction of a debt or compensation, a right which no longer obtains to-day. Polygynous marriages have always been a normal feature of Luvale life but since marriage was virilocal a man does not in consequence have to divide his time between several villages as may occur with polygynous peoples where marriage is uxorilocal. He would be expected to provide a separate hut for each wife at his own place of residence. It should be noted however that polygynous marriages are not the rule and that in samples counted they only occur in 15 – 20 per cent of males.

Antecedents to marriage

The role of the female puberty rites and male circumcision rites in preparing their participants for marriage have been described elsewhere[1] and it is only necessary to mention here the importance of these rituals in providing sexual instruction and their magical significance in ensuring fertility. Together with these preparations premarital sex relations are normal, and play a prominent part in children's play known as *mangongo* when boys and girls go off into the bush and pretend to be grown-ups. In the case of girls the age of marriage was normally determined by the onset of puberty. In the case of boys the maternal uncle would decide when his nephew was old enough for his marriage to be arranged. In the words of a Luvale aphorism: "If one's hair is long one should cut it, and if a youth is grown up to the point when he may cause trouble in the village by going after other people's wives it is time to find him a wife." The gradual modern tendency for girls not to be married at puberty has been mentioned in my paper *(l.c.)* on Luvale female puberty rites. This trend is much more pronounced to-day with youths. Among factors playing a part are the need to remain longer at school to acquire a sufficient education, preoccupation with earning a living, and the desire of young men to choose their own partners and not to accept an arranged marriage through the maternal uncle. Many young men to-day do not marry before their middle twenties.

Although the Luvale acknowledge that an element of consent was admitted in the past in arranged marriages, it is unlikely that it was exercised to any great extent especially by girls. Betrothals of girls before puberty were normal when they were still too young to exercise any choice and in the past it was possible for a man to mark the abdomen of a pregnant woman with white clay and say: "When the child within you is born, if it is a girl, it will be my wife". In passing it may be observed that in such a case if the mother or the child subsequently died the man was liable to pay compensation. The modern freedom of choice sometimes produces unexpected results. In a recent case heard at the Manyinga Court a woman claimed damages from a man for failure to marry her. She stated that she had been betrothed as a child and now that she was grown up the man had decided that he did not want to marry her. She alleged that she had rejected other suitors because

[1] WHITE : *Africa*, 1953, pp. 15–23 ; and *African Studies*, 1953, pp. 41–56.

of the expectation of being married to the man whom she sued. The court rejected the claim on the ground that a promise to marry her made whilst she was a child could not be held to be binding as no bride-price had passed and in any case freedom of choice was normal to-day.

The unwillingness of Luvale courts to-day to support child betrothals is exhibited in another way also ; in the case of a girl betrothed as a child and where the future husband had given her parents money to buy her clothes, she was rendered pregnant by another man. The courts in such a case are unwilling to award the prospective husband compensation though he might recover from the girl's parents money expended through them on her clothes on account of their failure to look after their daughter properly after agreeing to her betrothal.

In the past if a youth desired to marry he was expected to show some signs of being able to fend for himself. He was expected to go and catch a wild animal which he would bring to his father, mother's brother or grandfather. They would eat the animal but the killer would not partake of it. Alternatively he might build himself a house and place a bed in it ; when he had put the door in place, his elder brother or cousin would come and see whether it was secure against wild animals. If all was in order they would agree that he was old enough to marry a wife.

Luvale marriages are not characterized by the transfer of any large payment of money or goods. Originally the only transfer was of a token such as one or two metal bracelets and a genet cat skin. Hoes were often used as the token, hence the term *matemo* for marriage payments in use to-day. Under present conditions the *matemo* is a transfer of money or money and goods amounting on an average from three to five pounds. There have been recent cases where parents or guardians have placed a much higher price on their daughter's hand, especially if she had been educated above the average or if they were themselves wealthy. But generally speaking such action has resulted in a marked lack of suitors. The bride-price is sent to the village of the girl by a messenger. In addition to the *matemo* two further payments are made when handing over the bride : *kazundu*, the price of taking her away (*–zundula* – to take up) and *kavuku*, the price of opening the oil flask for the girl to be anointed on her hair before she goes to her husband. These two payments are not part of the *matemo* and are not recoverable on dissolution of marriage. The *matemo* does not give the husband any rights over possible progeny of the marriage which remains members of the mother's matrilineal kingroup. To-day in some cases the *matemo* is paid in instalments in order that a girl may join her husband quickly, but the marriage is not considered to have been completed until the full amount has been transferred.

The girl goes to her husband at this stage ; the next day the relatives of her husband give her small presents and introduce themselves to her. Her own relatives then bring meal and meat from their village and cook a meal known as *kauko* which is eaten by the girl and her husband and his relatives. This ritual includes the lighting of the girl's cooking fire by her relatives and serves to emphasize that the marriage has been fully completed. The relatives of the girl have provided the husband with a wife to feed him in the literal sense and to provide him with sexual relations for which the verb *–lya* (eat) is also used figuratively.

Stability of marriages

Luvale marriages to-day are marked by lack of stability although if they succeed in lasting for three years or so, they acquire a much greater likelihood of continuing. In a sample of marriages contracted by young men between the ages of 20 and 40 half failed or last for five years, and the men in question made three attempts on an average at marriage during this period. A sample from older people would almost certainly show greater stability but I have no adequate figures.

No single factor can be isolated to explain this situation but the following are believed to be of great importance. Marriages as arranged in the past by a man's maternal uncle were commonly between cross-cousins ; they served to provide links between groups of related persons and the relatives on both sides took much trouble to smooth out difficulties between husband and wife

if they arose. The dissolution of such marriages produced a break in an interlocking nexus of kinship ties and was not lightly undertaken. To-day with free choice of a partner the rule, no such scruples are felt on either side if one or other party to a marriage is inclined to get rid of the other.

Luvale women by reason of spending most of their lives residentially away from their own matrilineal kin have always been very independent. Fidelity to a husband has never been strictly enjoined upon them even in the past, as typified by the teaching to a girl at her puberty rites : "If your father-in-law wants to sleep with you, do not give him away or you will cause trouble." To be found out was the real fault since in marriages between cross-cousins it could lead to estrangement between the kinsmen linked by the marriage. Where marriages as to-day no longer regularly provide such links, the need for circumspection is much less. In a third of the marriages of which I have data divorce has been on the initiative of the wife, almost invariably because she had found another lover.

Modern economic factors have also facilitated the process. The *matemo* is normally handed to the father or maternal uncle of a girl according to her residence at the time of marriage, and such persons especially if elderly might not always find it easy to lay hands readily on the money needed to return the *matemo* on their daughter's or niece's divorce. But to-day a brother of the girl will commonly assist his sister if any such difficulties arise. As noted above close and friendly relations are found between brothers-in-law but if the brother of a girl finds his sister's husband a fool or an uncongenial kinsman, he is quick to suggest to his sister that she break up the marriage, and he will help by finding her an alternative husband to his and her liking. Being of a generation which is more closely involved in the modern economic prosperity of the Luvale he will also have little difficulty in helping financially in the return of the *matemo*. It is significant therefore that although the mother's brother has retained his position as the focus of residence for his male matrilineal kin, he has not retained the control over the marriages of his male or female dependents to which he was originally entitled by his position in the kinship group.

Closely correlated with this instability of marriages, is, in my opinion the low birth rate of the Luvale. The latter has been the subject of comment for some considerable time. Venereal disease has often been quoted as an explanation but without any sound evidence to show that its incidence among the Luvale is greater than among tribes with a much higher birth rate. Circumstantial evidence indeed suggests that it is not greater than among many communities with a high birth rate. On the other hand there is every reason to believe that the low birth rate is the result of deliberate use of contraceptive methods and abortifacients by Luvale women to ensure that in the event of a marriage breaking up, a woman will not be inconvenienced by pregnancy or by an unweaned child which would render her temporarily unmarriageable. As a result many Luvale women go for some years without a child and only begin to bear children when a marriage has lasted long enough to appear likely to endure. Closely linked to the inconvenience of pregnancy in interfering with the easy dissolution of a marriage, Luvale women during these years of married life also show a great desire to preserve their looks and figures as aids to easy subsequent marriage and a few years ago this feeling was given expression in a much sung ditty which ran : "I would rather have a new dress than a baby".

A subsidiary factor in the instability of Luvale marriages to-day is jealousy on the part of women in polygynous marriages. This arises at least in part from modern economic reasons. A man must ensure that he buys new clothes and other articles equally for both wives, and in the present conditions in which a woman's requirements are so much more varied and expensive than in the past, the husband of two wives often finds it difficult to afford to please both simultaneously in this way. Under modern conditions also the Luvale more and more builds himself a single large brick house which is unsuited to polygyny since by tradition a polygynist would be expected to provide separate houses for each wife. There

is substantial evidence that it is difficult to keep two wives under the same roof even if the house is big enough to provide them with separate rooms, for the second wife feels as one remarked : "She had not been given a house, but merely put on the verandah."

Death and the kinship group

Apart from divorce, death is the other cause of dissolution of marriage. Neither the sororate nor the levirate is found among the Luvale. But certain consequences follow. The death of a spouse imposes upon the survivor the obligation to make payments known as *jipepi* to the kinship group of the deceased. On the death of a wife the husband must make a money payment to her kin upon sending word of her death ; another payment when he goes to their village to the mourning rites *(chipeji)* ; another for the lighting of the cooking fires at the *chipeji* ; a payment for the carrying cloth, symbolic of her children ; a payment to the buriers ; and payment "for the house", i.e. for the services rendered by the wife in his house.

In the past the payments were very heavy and included a gun, many yards of cloth and a slave. In addition he must pay the relatives of his deceased wife for a ceremony of medication by which he is cleansed from the pollution of her death. The relatives of the wife do not provide a female kinswoman of the deceased to have intercourse with him to free him from the spirit of the deceased. This he does later himself by finding some woman who does not know that she is taking upon herself the spirit of the deceased spouse. For a wife who has lost a husband the payments are lighter for she does not have to pay for the carrying cloth or the services in the house. It will be noted that there is an important divergence from Lunda and Luchazi custom in which the relatives of the deceased must provide a male or female kinsman to have intercourse with the survivor to remove the spirit of the dead.

The fact that in the case of the death of a wife the husband must compensate her kingroup for the loss of a member who has rendered him services is reflected also in the death of children. If the wife has a child by a previous husband, and it dies, the present husband must pay the wife's kingroup for the death. In the case of children born of a current marriage, there is no payment required for the death of a first child ; the Luvale say : "It fell from its father's shoulder." But for the deaths of subsequent children payment must be made, on announcing the fact.

Since a woman during her married life lives largely detached from her matrilineal kin these payments on her death or on the death of her children serve to underline to her husband the fact that residential remoteness has not diminished her affiliation with her matrilineal kin. It is noteworthy that today the settling of the sums to be paid as *jipepi* commonly gives rise to bitter argument between the parties which has to be arbitrated by African courts. The payments are in general resented by the younger generation but as yet Luvale courts have shown no inclination to refuse to enforce the practice though Lunda courts at Balovale (but not at Mwinilunga) do not admit such disputes.

Modern Trends

Present-day conditions have had far-reaching effects upon Luvale society. The decay of the clans has already been commented on. The kinship group now finds itself shorn of many of its original functions. Direct action by retaliation on behalf of one of its members is obsolete. African courts set up under the Native Courts Ordinance take care of litigation although within the kinship group cases are often settled out of court between members. Joint liability for the wrongdoing of a member of the group is not recognized by the courts, although one kinsman may help another if he requires money to pay a fine or compensation. Migrant labour to industrial areas has lessened the opportunities for invocations of the spirits of the ancestors ; this combined with Christianity, or more often agnosticism, has deprived the village head of the exercise of one of his most important functions except on a much reduced scale. In the devolution of property on the death of a member the situation has also changed. The Manyinga Native Authority has passed a Rule providing that a man may make a written will to lay down how most of his property shall be inherited. Few young

men and young women to-day will tolerate an arranged marriage ; indeed cross-cousin marriages are definitely unpopular with the younger generation because they may be more difficult to dissolve in the face of the opposition of elderly kinsmen. In a sample of some 200 marriages only 10 per cent were cross-cousin marriages. Often young women no longer look to the senior member of their kinship group at the time of marriage and a brother may receive the *matemo*. The brother of a woman is now often impatient of a foolish or unsuccessful brother-in-law and quick to urge his sister to get rid of her husband and find a more eligible spouse so that the old permanent status of *unyali* no longer enjoys its former respect. The return of the *matemo* is an easy matter for the brother in the modern economic prosperity. Consequently marriages are much more unstable than in former times, and women commonly avoid the bearing of children until their marriage has lasted some time, lest they are suddenly left without a husband but unmarriageable owing to an unweaned child.

The old tendency to fission within a village due to fears of witchcraft or on account of the incompatibility of the other residents is reinforced by the tendency for the well-to-do to build a permanent house on his own. In any case mobility of residence within the villages remains a prominent feature. In a sample of 426 men 5·5 per cent had changed their village residence during the previous three years.

Nevertheless as described above the matrilineal kingroup remains the foundation for residential organization ; though attenuated by the loss of its group functions in the legal sphere and much reduced in its ritual and authoritarian activities *vis-a-vis* its members, it still maintains considerable strength as a basis for social alignment. Although we may speak of the decay of some features formerly prominent in Luvale society, it would be more correct to view social organization as a whole as in a state of rapid evolution and adaptation. In other studies I have stressed the important role of various rituals among the Luvale, such as male and female puberty rites, the *mungongi* initiation and the exorcisms of spirits, in providing media of social cohesion even when they have lost much of their original functions. Although these rituals involve persons drawn from a wider circle than a limited kinship group, it is none the less true that individuals participating in them normally do so jointly with other kinsmen, and in this way such rituals serve to maintain cohesion among kinsmen. Just as these rituals are valuable in providing cohesion for society through the coming together for their celebration, even though partly non-functional to-day, so it may be suggested that matrilineal kinship is likely to remain strong among the Luvale simply because the individual must have some alignment with a wider unit in society, even though the matrilineal kingroup no longer exercises many of its former functions. Luvale independence and individualism is nothing new as we have seen from the foregoing description of the fissionability of village and kinship units. It is this very fact which puts the Luvale to-day in a strong position to adapt his society to the modern influences which place so much emphasis on individualism rather than to succumb to destructive forces alien to his own type of society. His egalitarian and individualistic background fits him remarkably well for the social and economic revolution taking place in Central Africa.

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Since this paper was accepted for publication Mr. V. W. Turner has published his study of the Mwinilunga Lunda, "The Spatial Separation of Generations in Ndembu Village Structure" (*Africa*, xxv, 2, 1955, pp. 121–137). In this paper he develops the theme of how the presence of several generations of related matrilineal males in a village may give rise to tensions between the generations in the field of succession. Since the situation is similar to that which I have described above under the heading "Social distance within the kinship group", his final paragraph on p. 129 is important: "Many Ndembu are unaware of the existance of this form of spatial segregation. Nor is genealogical separation as such verbalized by Ndembu; it appears as the visible end-result of a number of social tendencies which I have

tried to isolate and analyse." This aspect of Lunda social organization which resembles that of the Luvale is discussed by him from a somewhat different viewpoint from the present description of the Luvale, but many of our conclusions are similar and the two accounts of Lunda and Luvale in this respect might be read with advantage for the comparisons afforded.

I cannot agree, however, with his relating of hunting to virilocal matrilineal societies of the Lunda and Luvale type. Ungulates are scarce in the Mwinilunga district as I know only too well, having spent three years there, doing village to village touring on foot with carriers. We got very little game apart from birds, even if a Boma messenger was specially detailed to shoot for the pot. Even if game animals were more abundant in the past, the country is much too heavily timbered for them ever to have been very abundant. Many Lunda villages must be lucky if they see game meat once a month, and in consequence rodents and small birds are eaten in large quantities. I think Mr. Turner lays much too much stress on the role of hunting in Lunda society, at least as a factor in social organization. I hope to deal in the near future with the role of hunting and fishing in Luvale life in which the question can be more fully examined.

Turner also equates the supposed predominance of hunting with cassava cultivation in contrast to the grain cultivators. But the argument must, I fear, fall away, for the Lunda were cultivators of finger-millet until the last decade. When I was at Mwinilunga from 1938–40 there was more finger-millet than cassava grown in the Mukangala area in which Turner did much of his field work. Cutting of millet gardens is done also from May to July when the grass is at its longest and hampers hunting; but men are free, even as millet cultivators, for the rest of the year, to hunt as much as they like.

I agree with the view expressed by him that the difference between uxorilocal and virilocal marriage in Central African matrilineal societies is of great importance and that an explanation for these contrasting social organizations is needed. The suggested difference in ecology due to different hunting and agricultural activities between the uxorilocal Bemba and virilocal Lunda and Luvale is not, however, tenable. Agriculture among the Bemba is not more complex nor more important (to use Turner's own words) than among the Lunda and Luvale. For all were originally grain cultivators, but the Lunda and still more the Luvale have changed to cassava as their staple in comparatively recent years. The Luvale in the extreme west of Balovale are still largely cultivators of bulrush-millet as ecological conditions there are ill-fitted for cassava owing to periodic inundations, but social structure and virilocal marriage remain the same throughout.

I regret that I have not at present any alternative hypothesis to offer, but it seems clear that the ecological argument which Turner has propounded on the basis of hunting and agricultural systems will hardly bear investigation, and that the agricultural element in it is based on incorrect surmises about cassava growing. C. M. N. W.

UNKHOSWE: THE SYSTEM OF GUARDIANSHIP IN CEWA MATRILINEAL SOCIETY

J. P. BRUWER *

SYNOPSIS

The social organization of the Cewa, a matrilineal tribe belonging to the Nyanja-speaking peoples of the Lake Nyasa region, is characterized by an interesting system of guardianship called unkhoswe, *by which the integrity of members of the same matrilineage is stressed. These matrilineages comprise male and female members reckoning descent through a classificatory system of kinship from a common ancestress genealogically recognized and remembered. Within the matrilineage, male members act as guardians, especially in regard to women and their children, on the basis of avuncular power. The guardianship is referred to as* unkhoswe, *the guardian himself is the* nkhoswe, *and those coming under his auspices are called his* mbumba.

The structural framework of the matrilineage is conceptualized in the form of a hierarchical system in which rank and status permeate through females and are projected on to males, in both cases according to sequence of birth. This gives rise to major and minor "breasts" or sections of the matrilineage. Within each sibling group, male members divide responsibility in regard to their sisters and the children of these, but the guardianship of the entire matrilineage remains vested in the senior male member. Guardianship is of permanent nature and also functions within the marriage unit.

Since matrilineages are exogamous units, husbands are drawn from other matrilineages belonging to different matrisibs and only act as seedraisers. These husbands remain integral members of their own matrilineages in which they may have guardian responsibilities. As a result of this, intermarrying matrilineages tend to reside together and mutually provide husbands and wives, thus giving rise to a system of preferential marriage which gives a wide connotation to the concept of cross-cousin unions. It actually tends to function between specific matrisibs. In this manner the unkhoswe *system is simplified in its continuation and can function properly even in the marriage unit where the interests of two matrilineages have met on the basis of ritual agreement.*

Demarcation of Reference Group

This paper concerns a subdivision of a great conglomorate of tribes generally referred to as the Nyanja-speaking peoples of British Central Africa. The word *nyanja* actually means "lake", and the name Nyanja by which these people are known in present times in fact denotes a number of Bantu tribes occupying certain areas in the Lake Nyasa region. Reference to these people as the Nyanja is of fairly recent origin, and the name came into use in its present connotation only after the advent of the Europeans to these parts during the second half of the previous century. The indigenous name by which these people were known in earlier times in *Malavi*, a name now practically obsolete among the people themselves.

According to the Portuguese explorer Barretto, the Malavi kingdom at one time extended "for two hundred leagues up the river (Zambezi) from the port of Quilimane and includes in itself all Macuani with many other people and vast provinces until it reaches Mombassa". At present the Nyanja-speaking peoples or the Malavi group, comprise three main divisions known to-day as the Nyanja, the Cewa and the Nsenga. These, together with smaller units of doubtful ethnic affinity but who to-day use Nyanja as the current

* Dr. J. P. Bruwer, M.A., D. Phil., is Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology in the University of Stellenbosch.

language, number well over a million souls. Their present abode is in parts of Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa.

The Cewa, without doubt the major subdivision of the Nyanja-speaking peoples, number about three-quarters of a million people. Their present habitat is predominantly in the Central Province of Nyasaland, the Eastern Province of Northern Rhodesia, and the Tete District of Portuguese East Africa. As is apparent from their abode, the Cewa do not form a homogeneous tribal unit ruled by one paramount chief. Territorially they are divided by international boundaries and do in fact comprise various sections under independent rulers. Ties of ethnic affinity are however generally recognized even to the extent of the relative status of the various territorial rulers. Two eminent figures emerge among these Cewa rulers namely Kalonga in Nyasaland and Undi in Northern Rhodesia.

This paper refers mainly to the Cewa residing in the Eastern Province of Northern Rhodesia and who are ruled by the paramount Undi. This section numbers approximately 70,000 people and are closely related to the Cewa group along the Kapoche river in Portuguese territory. Undi himself in fact originally resided in this area, and only crossed the border during 1935 when he took up residence in Northern Rhodesia so as to be among the major section of his people. His people have however occupied these regions for a few centuries and were well established when the Ngoni invasion ravished these parts during the first half of the last century. The Cewa were still subjugated by this warrior-tribe when the British advent brought peace and freedom to these regions at the end of the previous century.

The material presented in this paper, was collected during a missionary sojourn of some sixteen years in the country of Undi. I owe sincere gratitude to many Cewa individuals who were always ready to give unselfish aid in regard to a better understanding of their customs and of the underlying principles governing the pattern of Cewa society. These people belong to a generation that is rapidly passing away, as are some of their traditional customs, under the influence of a rapidly advancing western civilization. The *unkhoswe* institution or system of guardianship in Cewa society described here, is but one example of the integrity and functioning quality of social organization where the concept of matrilineal descent is supreme.

General pattern of Cewa Social Organization

The Cewa are predominantly cultivators of the soil, although cattle raising has become important in certain areas. The gardens are hoe-cultivated and usually situated adjacent to the villages. The main crops are maize, millet and sorghum used as staple foods and in addition beans, groundnuts, yams, pumpkins and various other vegetable types are grown for use as relish. The subsistence economy has however changed considerably during the last decades. Cash crops in the form of cotton and tobacco have been introduced and marketing facilities are also available for ordinary produce. This, together with a system of migrant labour taking the menfolk to big industrial centres inside and outside the country, have brought about a total change in Cewa subsistence economy. The changed economic situation does in Cewa tribal areas however still function within the framework of the traditional social order.

The basic local unit as far as residence and social organization are concerned is the village (***mundzi***). Cewa villages vary to a great extent in regard to numbers of huts as well as population. A village may consist of a few huts only or it may include as many as a hundred or even more. Generally however the Cewa village is of fair size with up to a hundred or more inhabitants. The village has no stereotyped form. The internal structural composition does however follow a regular pattern and is based upon the matrilineage as a localized unit. Analysis of villages shows that they are mainly occupied by members of a dominant or senior matrilineal core providing the village headman and one or more alien matrilineage groups linked to the founding matrilineage by conjugal bonds. Sometimes individuals alien to the village composing matrilineages attach themselves to a village and form part of its population.

They are however usually a very small minority and often absent in many villages.

The local matrilineages composing the village population are members of exogamous matrisibs (*mafuko*) scattered throughout the tribal area. The matrisib is to a certain extent conceptualized as a maximal matrilineage reckoning descent from a common ancestress. The rule of exogamy is strictly binding on all members of the same matrisib, but specific pairs of matrisibs show a preference for intermarriage. In practice this concept is embodied in the principle of conjugal relations between two local matrilineages belonging to different matrisibs and does in fact form the basis of preferential or cross-cousin marriages.

Cewa marriage is in its initial stages predominantly uxori-local and husbands move to the abode of their wives. There are however village internal as well as village external marriages and the term uxori-local residence should be conceived as referring to either the village of the wife or the section of her matrilineage within the same village as that of her husband. The custom of uxori-local residence affects the pattern of village population. In the case of village external marriages, the village of the women receives sons-in-law. In the case of village internal marriages, the matrilineage section of the women receives sons-in-law. This system is however conditioned through a custom called *citengwa* by which a woman may be removed to the village or village section of her husband. This is more often the case if the man is the senior guardian of his matrilineage.

Cewa marriage is characterized by the absence of valuable possessions passing from the wife-receiving to the wife-providing matrilineage. Tokens of goodwill are mutually given but have but little legal significance. The *cimalo* or *ciwongo* token which used to be a fowl or goat, has lately received legal status and now-a-days money is generally given by the husband. But the significance of *cimalo* within the traditional code was much more of a ritual than a legal nature although the two concepts cannot always be easily distinguished in Cewa society. The marriage negotiations do however include a probationary period of labour service rendered by the son-in-law to his parents-in-law.

Neither the *cimalo* token, nor the labour given, does in fact influence the integrity of the matrilineage. Both the woman and her children remain inalienable members of her matrilineage and the husband or his matrilineage does not attain rights over the children born of the marriage. The husband does obtain sexual rights and domestic service as far as his wife is concerned, but she is never incorporated into his matrilineage neither is he incorporated into her matrilineage. Each remains under the jurisdiction of their respective matrilineages. Children born in marriage belong to the matrilineage and matrisib of their mother. They may be referred to by the matrisib of their father which then becomes their *ciwongo* or surname but which has no legal significance and cannot be inherited by their own children. Matrilineal descent forms the basis of all inheritance whether it be succession of status, possessions or matrilineage and sib affiliation. Marriage does therefore not affect the matrilineage ties of either spouses, nor are the duties, obligations and privileges of matrilineage guardians materially changed when members of their lineage attain the status of married people.

The village is not only a social entity but also an administrative unit with the headman functioning as a responsible personality in matters concerning the villages relation to other similar units or its position within the wider administration structure. A number of villages within a defined area form a chiefdom ruled by a district chief owing allegiance to the paramount. In local matters these subchiefs with their councillors comprising headmen of major villages within their area, act independently and settle disputes with the exception of those of certain categories which have to be referred to the paramount or administration. At present the indigenous set-up has been canalized in the form of Native Authorities and Native Courts, and the system functions under the superstructure of the British Administration.

Both social and political organization hinge to a major degree on the matrilineage principle. It is however in the village unit and social matters of

local interest, that the matrilineage as an entity displays the corporate nature of its functioning quality. This corporate nature of the matrilineage forms the structural basis of the *unkhoswe* institution or the principle of guardianship in Cewa society.

The Cewa concept of Kinship

For a clear indication of the composition of the matrilineage, an outline of the Cewa concept of kinship is essential. It has already been stated that the principle of descent is matrilineal and kinship is therefore recognized only through uterine ties. Females are responsible for the continuation of the matrilineage and although male members are never alienated, their children cannot be incorporated into their matrilineage since by descent they again belong to the matrilineages of their respective mothers.

The principle of matrilineal descent is of major importance in Cewa society. The pattern of social organization rules that males are the dominant sex in all matters practical. In fact a superficial evaluation of Cewa society in function, will indicate very little that differs from that in a patrilineal society. Men are the rulers and councillors of state. They are the judges in court and the settlers of disputes within the village unit. For all practical purposes they dominate in the various avenues of every-day life. But the principle of matrilineal descent rules that the status and position of males are projected through females and a man's seniority or otherwise is therefore based upon the position of his mother within the genealogical unit indicated here by the term matrilineage. Thus the dominant position of males is an inherited factor functioning within the matrilineage as unit. They act as guardians over the interests of their matrilineages which they themselves cannot perpetuate, but which are continued through the female co-members.

The kinship terminology is classificatory and thus emphasizes the corporate nature of matrilineages. The underlying principles of the classificatory system of kinship are twofold. Firstly matrilineage members of the same generation are treated terminologically as siblings and therefore as equals in relation to other generations. They are indicated by the same term if they belong to the same sex. Secondly the kinship terminology differentiates clearly between male and female members of each generation. It should be noted however, that there is a marked equation of alternate generations with the result that members of alternate generations are sometimes indicated by the same terminology.

The kinship terminology provides for the clear indication of matrilineage members only within the scope of three generations. All those senior to the grandparent generation are collectively called *makolo*. Grandmothers are called *ambuye* and this term is also applied to the grandfather who is not a member of the matrilineage. The term *ambuye* has even a wider application since it is also used to indicate grandparents on the father's side. To differentiate between the two grandparent groups, the qualificatives *akucikazi* (on mother's side) and *akucimuna* (on father's side) are used. The grandmother's brother (on mother's side) is called *mkokowogona* and is, while living, the senior male member and thus the major guardian of the matrilineage.

Grandchildren are generally called *adzukulu* by their grandparents. As a result of the equation of alternate generations, a grandfather (on mother's side) may in fact call his granddaughter *mkazanga* (my wife) whereas the grandmother will call her *mkazimnzanga* (my co-wife). The granddaughter will reciprocate with the term *mwamunanga* (my husband) and *mkazimnzanga* (my co-wife). It should be noted in this connection that grandfather and granddaughter belong to two different matrilineages inter-related through marriage. They are conceptually therefore potential husband and wife being according to the equation of alternate generations cross-cousins if the grandfather's spouse is a preferential cross-cousin. Although difference in age rules out the general occurrence of conjugal relations between grandfathers and granddaughters, marriages of this type are known to exist occasionally.

In regard to succeeding generations there is a clear differentiation in the terminology. Here again the classificatory system is apparent, and

members of the same generation and belonging to the same matrilineage are indicated by the same kinship terms with the only exception that the two sexes are clearly distinguished. Terminology in regard to two succeeding generations furthermore clearly indicates matrilineal bonds on the one hand and seminal bonds on the other.

The mother, as well as the female co-members of her sibling group, is called *amai*. Male members of the mother's sibling group are called *atsibweni*. Mothers call their children *ana* using the qualificatives *–kazi* (female) and *–muna* (male) to indicate sex. The *atsibweni* or mother's brother calls his sisters' daughters *afumakazi* or *amai ang'ono* (small mothers) and their sons *aphwa*. These mutual terms then indicate members of the same matrilineage.

The father as well as the male co-members of his sibling group is called *atate*. Female co-members of the father's sibling group are called *atate akazi* (female fathers). This group represents the seminal bond and may also call the next junior generation of the wife's matrilineage *ana* but never *afumakazi* or *aphwa*.

People within the same generation also distinguish clearly between matrilineal and seminal bonds. Siblings of the same sex call one another *abale* and those of the opposite sex call one another *alongo*. The terms *abale* and *alongo* thus indicate members of the same matrilineage and include the children of all those indicated as *amai* (mothers). The children of those called *atsibweni* (mother's brother) and *atate akazi* (female father) are indicated as *asuani* or cross-cousins a term emphasizing seminal bonds. The term *asuani* does however not only stress the seminal bond, but is a direct indication of potential spouses according to the system of preferential cross-cousin mating, thus denoting the continual integration of two matrilineages in a conjugal sense.

The composition of the matrilineage

From the brief indication of the Cewa kinship terminology given above, it will be clear that the system embodies two definite principles. Firstly kinship terms used in regard to each of three generations are of a classificatory nature, and a large number of individuals are in each case denoted by the same term. Secondly there is a clear differentiation in terminology to distinguish between people linked through seminal bonds and those integrated according to the principle of matrilineal descent. It is the latter group that comprises the matrilineage or localized group of a scattered matrisib. Since marriages are always exogamous as far as members of the same matrilineage and matrisib are concerned, neither seminal nor conjugal bonds can facilitate membership of a matrilineage or matrisib since this in only inherited through the mother. The progeny of male members of the matrilineage thus falls outside this corporate group, and neither are husbands ever included in the matrilineage of their wives or *vice versa*.

Looking at the matrilineage over a depth of three generations, that is, the group generally comprising the living members, it includes the following people: The *ambuye* (grandmothers on mother's side), the male co-members of the sibling group of these *ambuye* (i. e. the *mikokoyogona*), the *amai* (mothers) or daughters of the *ambuye*, the male co-members of the sibling group of the *amai* (i. e. the *atsibweni*) or the mothers' brothers, and the progeny of the *amai* or mothers.

The matrilineage then consists of male and female members reckoning descent from a common ancestress genealogically recognized and remembered. Within the matrilineage there is a well defined system of seniority which is reflected in the various avenues of practical life, ritual proceedings and juridical rights and duties. The basis of seniority is birthright. Birthright is reflected through the female members of the matrilineage and projected on to their progeny, both male and female.

The Cewa principle of seniority within the matrilineage hinges on the concept conveyed by the term "*bele*" meaning "breast". The eldest daughter of a woman is called "*bele lalikulu*" (major breast) and the others in order of birth are referred to as *bele lalingono* (minor breast). The status of these "breasts" is projected on to their respective children. Thus the children of the major breast are superior to the children of

the minor breast in matters concerning the inheritance of status, titles and rank. In matters of practical interest for example the status of village headman, chief, etc., as well as in the general pattern of ordinary life, the male members of the matrilineage play a dominant part. The status of these male members is inherited through their mothers as far as their relative positions are concerned both within the matrilineage and within their uterine sibling group. The first-born son becomes the senior member but it is the first-born daughter who again gives birth to the senior male and female members in the succeeding junior generation.

The continuous nature of the matrilineage is embodied in the kinship terminology and becomes especially clear through the reference to male members. This is not without reason, since a specific relationship exists between male members and female members of the same matrilineage. This relationship forms the functioning basis of *unkhoswe* or the system of guardianship.

The Unkhoswe institution

The *unkhoswe* institution is based upon the corporate nature of the matrilineage and the principle that male members are looked upon as the guardians of the matrilineage and especially in regard to female members and their junior progeny. The relationship itself is referred to as *unkhoswe* whereas the male guardian is called *nkhoswe*. Another term is of significance here namely *mbumba*. This term is used by the *nkhoswe* to refer to those coming under his auspices as responsible relative.

Although the term *mbumba* is generally applied to a man's sisters and their children, its real significance should be judged according to the corporate nature of the matrilineage as functioning unit. The oldest living male member of the matrilineage is indeed the guardian or *nkhoswe* of the entire matrilineage. In practice however his functional duties are very often delegated to the senior male member of the next junior generation, in other words to the first-born son of his elder sister, the *bele lalikulu* (major breast). This man then, who is the mother's brother or *atsibweni*, becomes in practice the functioning guardian over his sisters and their children. In minor matters the *atsibweni* may again delegate his authority to his sister's son (his *muphwa*) as far as his sister's daughters are concerned. Although authority therefore rests with the male member of the senior generation within the matrilineage, it is frequently the brother who acts on behalf of his sisters and their children in matters of practical interest.

The functioning basis of the system generally indicated as the avunculate whereby the mother's brother appears as the responsible relative on the horizon of the matrilineal system, should in Cewa society at least be interpreted within the framework of the entire matrilineage. Although the mother's brother is generally looked upon as the important relative as far as duties, responsibilities and obligations are concerned, he need not necessarily be the senior responsible relative within the matrilineage. This position is by order of birth occupied by the *mkokowogona* who only delegates to the mother's brother and has in fact the last say. Naturally the *mkokowogona* is usually an aged person and since the sons of his own sisters (i.e. the mothers' brothers in society) have attained the adult stage, very little is left in which he should act as the responsible relative on their behalf.

Another principle necessitates the decentralization of responsibility within the matrilineage namely the segmentary nature of this social unit. It has already been stated that the Cewa base the position of female members of the matrilineage on the principle of seniority of birth thus giving rise to the concept of *mabele* (breasts) or houses pertaining to the progeny of spesific women within the genealogic group. This principle stimulates a gradual segmentation of the matrilineage in the process of its growth. Thus the various male members of each succeeding generation tend to become the guardians of specific "breasts" and each brother takes responsibility for one or more of his sisters and her children. Naturally, the senior brother acts as guardian to his eldest sister and her children since he inherits the position of the senior *mkokowogona* (his mother's oldest brother)

and this woman again bears his successor, namely her first-born son.

It should be noted however that the principle of segmentation does not affect the senior status of the eldest mother's brother who in fact remains the senior guardian of the entire matrilineage when the senior *mkokowogona* falls away. This principle does, however, affect the integrity of the matrilineage to the extent that it sometimes leads to cleavages within the matrilineal group. A section or "house" may break away and form a new village or attach itself to another existing village. Even such action would however not affect the relative position of the various "breasts" within the matrilineage. Genealogical ties remain constant and the relative status of members of the matrilineage is also constant. This is the major underlying principle why Cewa society recognizes minor and major villages within the same locality. Generally the major village represents the direct descendants of the original major breast of the dominant matrilineage in the vicinity.

In view of the structural nature of the matrilineage, the *unkhoswe* institution or system of guardianship embodies two principles. Firstly the matrilineage is looked upon as a corporate group as far as guardianship is concerned, and the senior male member is by right of birth (being the oldest son of the senior female member of major breast) the responsible relative in regard to all members of his matrilineage or *mbumba*. Secondly the segmentary nature of the matrilineage tends to decentralize practical guardianship thus giving rise to smaller *mbumba* or sections of the matrilineage under the auspices of the various male members. In practice this means that each brother may have his own *mbumba* or responsibility section to whom he becomes the immediate *nkhoswe* (guardian or responsible relative). The relative positions of the various *ankhoswe* is however strictly regulated by the principle of seniority of birth in regard to themselves as well as that of their respective mothers.

The *unkhoswe* institution thus first and foremost regulates the continual nature of the relative status position of both males and females within the matrilineage. This would appear to be an important function of the *unkhoswe* institution, since Cewa society has practically no other institution through which the genealogical position of matrilineal members are earmarked beyond any doubt. In Bantu society, and more especially so in patrilineal societies, the genealogical sequence is generally perpetuated through the system of organized initiation which for males is to a great extent lacking in Cewa social organization. The practical function of *unkhoswe* is however equally important, since, through it, no member of the matrilineage ever lacks the guidance and aid of a responsible relative or *nkhoswe*. The position of the *nkhoswe* in regard to his *mbumba* is that of guardian, helper and defender in all matters social and juridical. This leads to the avuncular system or the responsible position occupied by the mother's brother in matrilineal society, since, sisters' children are the customary responsibility of the *atsibweni* or guardians of the matrilineage, and no father attains jurisdiction over his children as is the case in patrilineal society. Especially in regard to marriage, the *unkhoswe* institution becomes an important functioning factor since it is through conjugal bonds that the members of two matrilineages are welded into a single social unit namely a marriage.

Unkhoswe as a functioning factor in marriage

The functioning qualities of the system of guardianship in marriage does not differ from that within the matrilineage itself, and is indeed only a continual projection of the system within the matrilineal group. It stresses the inalienability of matrilineage members and furthermore clearly emphasizes the impossibility of total independence of a marriage unit as far as the two matrilineages of husband and wife are concerned. Neither husband nor wife can sever matrilineal ties through marriage, and they are never excluded as far as the *unkhoswe* institution within their corporate matrilineages is concerned. The husband still remains within the functioning orbit of his own matrilineage, whereas wife and children come under the auspices of her own matrilineage.

In regard to the Cewa marriage unit, a factor of importance should be mentioned namely the

system of preferential marriages between cross-cousins. In the narrowest sense this in fact means intermarriage among children of brothers and sisters. The principle of cross-cousin marriages has in Cewa society however a much wider connotation. All persons in the category of *asuani* are included in the concept of cross-cousins whether they are the children of uterine siblings or not. This means that members of each generation belonging to two matrilineages originally linked by conjugal bonds, are mutually looked upon as cross-cousins. It has already been mentioned that matrisibs tend to intermarry in pairs and the cross-cousin concept thus becomes a functioning reality between two conjugally linked matrisibs. The Cewa actually emphasize this wider concept of preferential marriages when they say: *Eni Banda abala eni Phili, eni Phili abala eni-Banda* (The Banda sib bears the Phili sib and the Phili sib bears the Banda sib).

Naturally the preferential marriages function predominantly among local matrilineages. If these matrilineages form a village unit, the question of uxori-local residence only arises as far as village sections are concerned since both husband and wife reside in the same village. In traditional Cewa society cross-cousin marriages form a fairly high percentage of the total number of marriages, and the couples are usually residents of either the same village or villages in the immediate neighbourhood. This, together with the fact that the concept of cross-cousins in the wide classificatory sense and the sib conception, permit an easier functioning of the *unkhoswe* system within the marriage unit. Since the interests of two matrilineages are embodied in the family group (husband, wife and children) it is natural to conceive that friction would be lessened by a system of preferential marriages since the spouses belong to matrilineages already linked by conjugal bonds. In this respect preferential marriages may be looked upon as a balancing factor as far as the dual interests of two matrilineages within one family unit is concerned.

Preferential marriage between cross-cousins has another underlying principle which is of interest as far as the functioning of the *unkhoswe* system is concerned. It is the custom in some societies that the wife-providing group stands in a position of seniority to the wife receiving group. This factor is not altogether absent in Cewa society if judged against the relationship between in-laws of two succeeding generations. In-laws on the same generation level are however on an equal footing. This is borne out by the term *asewele* mutually used between the parents of a married couple, as well as that of *alamu* mutually used among brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. There is no differentiation in status between the wife-providing and wife-receiving matrilineages since cross-cousin marriages are symmetric and the two lineages mutually provide and receive wives. This concept is furthermore emphasized by the *unkhoswe* institution since the guardians of the two matrilineages meet on an equal basis within the marriage unit. The guardian of the husband's matrilineage, that is his own *nkhoswe*, will therefore not be in a junior position when discussing matters arising out of the marriage with the guardian of the woman and her children. In the case of a cross-cousin marriage, the two guardians may indeed be linked by conjugal bonds if a brother and sister of one matrilineage married a brother and sister of another matrilineage. In this case the two *ankhoswe* or guardians will be brothers-in-law. This system may thus be reduced to the fact that a matrilineage, that is the wife-receiving group in one generation, becomes the wife-providing group in the next succeeding generation. But, since preferential marriages are symmetric, both males and females are mutually interchanged as spouses between the two matrilineages in each generation.

The system of guardianship as a functioning institution in inter-matrilineage relations becomes eminently significant in connection with the actual marriage procedure. Marriage is to a great extent a factor of mutual interest between two matrilineage groups and the preliminary negotiations are carried out between the *ankhoswe* or guardians of the two interested lineages. Generally it is the *mkokowogona* of the potential bridegroom who opens up negotiations with the *mkokowogona* of the potential bride. Thus grandparents on the

mother's side act on behalf of their grandchildren.

When the preliminary negotiations on the *mkokowogona* level have been carried out with success, it is usually the brothers of both bride and bridegroom who act as further go-betweens until the negotiations reach the final stage.

During the final stages when the marriage ceremony is completed the two respective *ankhoswe* who will be responsible for the specific marriage unit, are ritually appointed. This is done during communal beer-drinking, when members of the two matrilineages concerned meet together. The beer is called *mowa waunkhoswe* (beer of guardianship) and the ceremony is referred to as *kumanga unkhoswe* (to ratify the *unkhoswe* or guardianship). In this way the marriage unit is placed under the continual guardianship of two *ankhoswe*, one representing the matrilineage of the husband, and one representing the matrilineage of the wife and her children.

The duties of these *ankhoswe* are manifold. They get in touch with one another in regard to matters arising within the marriage unit and are indeed the mouthpieces of the two matrilineages in matters concerning the two spouses and their children. Theirs is the responsibility to bring matters concerning the marriage unit to the attention of the senior guardians of the two matrilineages linked through the specific conjugal bond.

Apart from ordinary domestic matters and problems which may need the attention of the two *ankhoswe*, they have functioning duties in regard to certain ritual ceremonies pertaining to the marriage couple and their children. The more important of these ceremonies are those concerning the first conception (*cisamba*), the birth of the child (*kubadwa kwamwana*), the initiation of the child into society shortly after birth (*kusambitsa mwana*), the initiation of children into adult society (*cinamwali*), and ceremonies pertaining to illness and death. In regard to these ceremonies, it is the duty of the two *ankhoswe* to notify the two matrilineages in connection with all matters and to arrange through the senior guardians the necessary action.

It is not necessary to describe these ceremonies here, interesting though they may be. They have only been mentioned to show that two matrilineages linked through conjugal bonds are closely integrated in the ritual sense but their integrity as separate matrilineal groups remains intact. The apparent contradiction of ritual integration of two matrilineages on the one hand and the corporate nature of each matrilineage on the other hand, is magnificently bridged by the *unkhoswe* institution or principle of guardianship which is a prominent characteristic of Cewa matrilineal society.

General summary and conclusions

Consanguinity figures prominently as determining factor within the code of Cewa social structure and social organization. The concept of consanguine bonds is embodied within well defined lineages reckoning genealogical descent through the matrix only thus giving rise to matrilineages forming corporate groups localized in village units. The concept of matrilineal descent is extended however to include all members of the same matrisib which thus becomes, as the matrilineage, an exogamous entity but is never a corporate unit since its members are scattered throughout the tribal area.

The structural framework of the matrilineage is conceptualized in the form of a hierarchical system in which rank and status are ordained through the customary concept of seniority according to birthright. The principle of seniority within the matrilineage, permeates through women thus creating major and minor breasts that again project their status on to their progeny. This principle gives rise to a matrilineage of segmentary nature, each section receiving its status from the originating matrix or breast.

Within the matrilineage as well as within each section thereof, males are the dominant sex and become the guardians of the female co-members of the matrilineage. The relative status of male members within the matrilineage is inherited by birth through their mothers and the rank sequence is always *mikokoyogona* (grandmothers' brothers on mother's side) *atsibweni* (mothers' brothers) and *aphwa* (sisters' sons) the senior son of the senior

sister (breast) in each generation being the senior guardian or potential senior guardian within the matrilineage. Within the matrilineage seniority thus coincides with guardian responsibilities and rights. Both seniority and guardianship are of a permanent nature within the pattern of descent, since, living members of the matrilineage reflect a projection of past generations, a projection again continued in their legitimate progeny. The segmentary nature of the matrilineage according to the "breast" principle, permits decentralizing and delegation of duties and responsibilities thus giving rise to guardianship functioning within the sibling group on the basis of avuncular power. No right, privilege or responsibility of the major breast or the senior patron born to that breast is however alienated through segmentary guardianship.

Interests of two matrilineages are integrated within a marriage unit and affinal ties thus affect marriage couple as well as their respective matrilineal groups. The establishment of conjugal bonds thus creates dual interests within one of the most important social unions, the marriage, a fact which may develop into a core of potential friction and tension between matrilineages. This possibility is especially eminent in a society where marriage stability predominantly rests on the ritual significance of the agreement since the passing of valuable possessions as a customary subscription to a marriage is absent. The necessity for an organized system guarding the interests of both matrilineages concerned with the marriage unit, becomes apparent. Cewa society has met this necessity by projecting the *unkhoswe* institution or system of guardianship functioning within the matrilineage on to the marriage unit, and two *unkhoswe*, one from the woman's matrilineage and one from the man's matrilineages, are delegated to guard the interests of the co-members of their respective matrilineages linked through marriage. In this way spouses are neither alienated from their matrilineages nor do they function as an independent unit in marriage.

The system of preferential marriages between cross-cousins can have no material basis in Cewa society as has been postulated for other Bantu societies practising the so-called *lobola* system by which valuable possessions pass from the wife-receiving to the wife-providing lineage. Preferential cross-cousin marriages are symmetric and both males and females are mutually interchanged as spouses between matrilineages. Thus the one matrilineage acts as seed raiser for the other and both are therefore mutually interdependent. The system of preferential cross-cousin marriages can therefore only be interpreted in the light of this interdependence of matrilineages. It is thus a factor stimulating the continual integration of interests between two matrilineages and together with the *unkhoswe* institution, lessens the possibility of friction and tension within a marriage unit where the dual interests of two different groups of people coincide on the basis of ritual agreement only.

MATURITY AND MARRIAGE AMONG THE NORTHERN BASUKUMA OF TANGANYIKA

R. E. S. TANNER *

SYNOPSIS

The growing up of boys and girls is without restrictions on their association or activities, provided that their conduct is reasonably restrained. The idea of marriage is associated with the desire for social security and stability and regularity in their lives. The betrothal is a formalized relationship for which there is freedom of choice for both man and woman, and in which the latter has clear opportunities for repudiating the arrangement.

Bride-price is essential to, or an aim in, all arrangements : It is accompanied by formal discussions and feasting, and a wide range of bargaining techniques, while the passage of bride-price cattle from one family to another is the occasion for ritual and excitement. There is little pressure to pay off debts of uncompleted bride-price.

The wedding is attended by friends of the bride and groom and few adults. The bride offers formalized resistance to consummation of the marriage, and thereafter a bull of defloration is killed. The marriage of additional wives follows the same procedure, but is accompanied by formal gifts to senior wives. The marriage of a woman who has had children by previous marriage, and that of a widow or widower, is accompanied by ceremonial cleansing of the parties. Marriages may be effected by either party running off to the house of the other, and by elopement. There exists also a type common-law marriage, of increasing popularity in present-day society, and a form of marriage contracted in order to get food in time of famine. The avoidance between the bride and groom and their in-laws is broken down by degrees in the years after the marriage.

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PART 1

INTRODUCTION

This article is intended to serve as an introduction to the marriage customs of the Basukuma of Mwanza district and to their life leading up to marriage, but it does not cover consanguinity, divorce, extra-marital pregnancy or the life of the married couple after the first few months of marriage.

The informants for the information obtained have been men of thirty years or more, as well as a few women of mature age who expressed opinions on matters for which they were questioned. The draft was read through to a number of elders for help in the orthography.

The statistics quoted were obtained in the Nyamamba and Nyambiti parishes of the Massanza I chiefdom during 1952.

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* Mr. R.E.S. Tanner is a District Officer in Tanganyika.

1. GROWING-UP

In Sukuma life there is no clearly prescribed sexual role because children and young boys (*bayanda*) and girls (*baniki*) play together without restriction, in the course of which there is bound to be an increasing amount of sex play. Children thus behaving would get a sound beating from their parents or neighbours catching them, but nevertheless such play is universal and forms a gradual and informal education into life which is denied to more withdrawn communities.

However critical we may be over such behaviour, there is little point in denying that for the Sukuma child, living in rural and crowded conditions, (as for any child of the slums where there is no protective screen of supervision and education), there can be little that the growing child does not see or hear, apart from his or her own experiences. Both sexes from about the age of eight years until round about the time of puberty, play at building small houses and setting up families therein. This game (*bulya*) consists in cooking grain that they have gleaned from the fields at harvest, the inevitable sexual play between the children acting as mother and father, and the caring for imitation cattle (*kubumba ng'ombe*) made out of clay which are moved in and out of stick pens at the correct times just as if the children were looking after real cattle.

In each pretended family there will be a father and mother as well as children, while the stupid child is told to go outside and imitate the hyaena prowling round (*mbuuli* or *chiluchilu*). The children are also used to scare birds from the fields (*kumala noni mu migunda*) and to help with the cattle if they are boys, or to learn to grind flour, etc., if they are girls. Thus from an early age both boys and girls are conditioned into their future roles as husbands and wives with their sexual activity taken for granted, with the only restriction that it should be carried on discreetly so that the older generation should not notice and of course that unmarried girls should not bear children.

Seemingly these restrictions are the linking of opposites since no attempt is made to chaperon young girls who are as yet unmarried, with the result that they have comparative freedom to sleep where they like and with whom they like. In addition, casual sexual encounters are aided by the fact that there is no inspection at marriage to testify to the virginity of the bride. All in all a girl can do what she likes provided that she does not get a reputation for bad morals, which will make it difficult for her to get a husband. It follows therefore that sexual activity between unmarried people has no particular moral connotation except in so far as it affects the girl's relationship to her family. A girl sleeping discreetly with her lover brings no criticism on to her family and is therefore condoned in fact though decried in theory, but once she becomes pregnant, she takes on a new position in her family which affects her value and her activities, and her conduct becomes reprehensible and the subject of customary law.

On approaching puberty both youths (*basumba*) and grown girls (*banhya*) stop sleeping at home and sleep in separate dormitories for the girls (*maji*) and for the boys (*ibanza*), which they continue to do until the boys are married and the girls betrothed. These separate dormitories can be built and maintained by anyone who feels in need of the noise and companionship of the young, and usually exist in the ratio of one to every ten compounds or so, although a man with no children would never have one. Perhaps it is usually a man with several children who gets tired of the noise and play in the house and in order to get some peace, decides to build a separate house for them ; once the children have been married off the boys' house falls into disuse and the girls' house might become the hut of a son-in-law.

In the girls' dormitory about ten girls sleep together, but in the boys' dormitory there are usually more than that number of boys. There is free movement between these dormitories and anyone wishing to leave or to enter another has no need to ask permission from the house-owner or the children themselves. The houses are used as dormitories only and they all eat at home (*kuhingula*); the house is kept repaired and swept by the house-owner for which he can expect no

help as of right, but only by request. The beds in both dormitories are made by one of the group in turn (*ng'wambi*); in the girls' house stick beds of the usual sort are made but the boys sleep on hides on the ground.

The boys tend to sit round the fire to a late hour until the bed-maker on duty gives a sudden cry (*igunya*) that all is ready, whereupon there is a rush into the house as there is never enough sleeping space for all and someone is always going to be with his back off the hides. No sneaking off to sleep is allowed.[1]

The boys' dormitory is no longer common and can be found only in the more backward parts; its disappearance is due to increased education and its higher standards of personal cleanliness, but the girls' dormitory is still a very important part of village life which at the moment is not disappearing.

The boys' dormitory is the centre in which the well adjusted boy is able to develop himself, whereas the abnormal and maladjusted child becomes the target of ruthless teasing and possible expulsion from the group. The enuretic (*ntundagi* or *nzobe*) will be chased away at once and might only be allowed to stay with a separate bed-hide if he is well liked by a few of the others; this defect is thought to be comparatively common and is ascribed to dreams which make the sufferer think that he is out-of-doors. The position of an enuretic is as pathetic in this society as in ours and the descriptions of a sufferer making desperate attempts to cover up his trouble show very clearly that the odd child is heavily penalized in his life.

The anti-social child who refuses to help others in the group with their tasks (*ng'wambilwa*) is soon chased away, and so is the boy with dirty habits (*nofu*), or one who is unusually foul-mouthed and disrespectful to his elders (*atogilwe kuyomba sha minala*).

The girls' house is of course the centre of both attraction and activity but it is an established convention that whatever may actually occur between boys and girls, no boy should be seen to enter the girls' house, to which end numberless stratagems are used: For instance the girl may go out as if to relieve herself and return with the boy wrapped to her in the one cloth, or again the boy may sneak up to the house and by coughing or showing a stick at the window get the girl to open the door; in fact, so long as no one sees, all the numberless devices of illicit love are used. Once inside, the boy and girl will be given a bed by courtesy while the girls from it sleep nearby on the floor, and they will then sleep together with little privacy and no restrictions over their conduct, other than those to which they have been brought up by their parents.

Nevertheless this parental influence strongly governs the actions of the girls who have been taught that an illegitimate child lowers their value in the marriage market, and the strength of this teaching shows in the relatively low rate of illegitimate births, of which there were 31 among 116 married women who subsequently produced 341 legitimate children.

Undoubtedly intercourse does take place, but it seems that there is little use made of herbal contraceptives and that almost all girls regard the second half of the time between menstruations as a period in which they are safe from conception.

When the girls have started to sleep in the girls' house, they will take the grain that they have been told to grind by their mothers up to flat rocks in the hills (*ma'nhe*) near to their homes, where they will do the work in company with the young men with whom they have made assignations. This accounts for the large number of ground-out grinding places that are to be seen in out of the way places on flat rocks, which might otherwise be taken as evidence of human activity before the time of the present inhabitants.

It is not compulsory for a girl to sleep in the girls' house and the strict father will probably keep his daughter at home for fear that she might pick up bad habits, or become pregnant and possibly difficult to marry off, but this sort of parental control is rather rare. The more indulgent and lazy father lets his daughter go where she wishes

[1] *Bukeleja wa mhimbi* (If you delay you will sleep outside like a rock rabbit). *Nkanga akatogwa moto* (The fire watcher misses his opportunity). *Hagali naho* (First come, first served).

and to sleep away from home because she has been pestering him to let her join in the fun with the other girls of her age and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to keep her caged up all the time.

2. THE IDEA OF MARRIAGE

The underlying force behind marriage remains very much a form of social security with sons to help in the fields and girls to bring in bride-price as well as giving the married man twice the number of relatives to scrounge from in times of difficulty. The unmarried man of course has no right to any children that he may sire, and naturally the community, in defence of itself, favours the institution of marriage as bringing stability and regularity into their life. Right to the woman's children is only obtained through the payment of bride-price.

The relationship of a man and his wife for the start of their marriage is principally a sexual one although its primary object is the procreation of children and not purely sexual satisfaction. It is doubtful whether there is any idea of permanency in the mind of a man about to marry and, of course, sentiment as we understand it is usually absent, though it may grow into the marriage after some years. The role of sentiment in sexual relations is definitely increasing, probably because nowadays there is more freedom and independence from the parents for their choice of a partner.

Although there is no idea of permanency inherent in a marriage and divorce is not too difficult to obtain, out of a sample of 115 marriages no less than 59, or 51 per cent, had existed for ten years or more; here it may be noted that out of 39 wives questioned, 32 had not been married prior to their present marriages and that out of their 32 husbands, 25 had not been married to anyone else.

It should not be assumed that the sexual relationship of marriage excites strong affection between a married couple and it is usual to find far stronger ties of affection between the partners and their siblings than between themselves. If the wife is in trouble, she will go to her brothers, and, for example, should she be beaten badly by her husband and the case goes to court, the compensation awarded against the husband will be paid to her family and not to the wife who was injured. Thus it is seen that the wife belongs half to her husband and half to her family to whom she will turn at all times of trouble or when the marriage is dissolved, and that in essence the husband has only bought the use of the woman's womb. The wife is always somewhat under the protection of her family as the blood tie is far stronger than the marriage bond.

Once she is married she becomes in essence the exclusive sexual property of her husband in an economic and social transaction between the two families, so that should she commit adultery she is damaging not only the exclusive rights of her husband but endangering possibly the transaction between the families which at least in the past must have had serious consequences, since the bride-price payment gives control over the woman's reproductive power.

As in any other community, marriage in all its aspects is a field in which the aphorist has given his talents full play and a number of sayings are in common use, although defying anything more than a very literal translation.

Mitumba iliho lelo ubugota nduhu (A wedding is only a wedding, it takes a man to sleep with a girl)

Bukulu wa kulunja lelo kigosha nduhu (What good is it to betroth eagerly if that is all you are capable of doing)

Ntolwa aliho lelo ntoji aliho (There are plenty of girls but few husbands)

Utizugwa ng'holo hamo ntondo ukupyenna; Lelo wigwasha nose (If you don't succeed try, try again)

Lelo ulundumba bajishosheko (Slow but sure fills the womb)

Butamachimu nitonga lelo shikubita gete (You were just a man to start off with, but indeed you are a bull amongst men)

Witegi butiboba sayayi akanya akungile) Be prepared)

Wadumpile funwa katambilagwe tame (Enough is as good as a feast)

Bukanilwa buta ni nanasa (Don't count your chickens before they are hatched)

Ihaha ulunja na tundunipa; Hangi na lelo uni-kuliche duhu (The proof of the pudding lies in a second helping)

Haha utogilwe iki nkwilima wabakije; Ng'wana wiswe watugolile kunkwano (The proof of the pudding has lain in the eating)

3. BETROTHAL

Marriage for the man usually takes place in the early twenties so that out of 129 men estimated at being over the age of eighteen, 28 were still unmarried; but for the girl the time of marriage is usually several years earlier.

On deciding to marry, a youth will get his parents' permission, usually with some particular girl in mind, and when they agree he goes to a house near to that of the girl and she is called there on some pretext so that he can get a good look at her. He certainly never goes to her house nor does he talk to her, although he has probably been spying her out for some time to see if she is industrious or lazy or whether she conducts herself properly.

A girl can be betrothed at any time after her fifth year, but she usually stays with her mother or more rarely goes to live with her future husband more or less as his daughter for the carrying out of domestic chores and cooking for him, until the outward signs of puberty appear when the marriage would be celebrated. Despite the obvious abuses to which such a custom might lead, there seems to be a genuine and almost universal reluctance to have intercourse with immature girls for fear of damaging them for childbearing.

After this he thoroughly sifts the matter over in his own mind as well as discussing the girl with his parents and on deciding to go ahead he goes there again with a friend and the girl comes as well with a friend, both of whom may be relatives. If the boy and girl agree to marry with their parents permission (*kulunja*) there is an exchange (*kuwana*) of insignificant gifts (*handikilo* or *ikongolo*) such as bracelets or beads, which, in some places, is already dying out and being replaced now by slightly more expensive gifts such as a watch from a well-to-do person. There is some excitement after the betrothal has been settled between the boy's friend and the girl and between the girl's friend and the man. There are no negotiations between the engaged couple themselves. It is contrary to custom for a father to compel his daughter to marry a man not of her choice and should the girl resist her father's wish she would undoubtedly have public opinion almost universally on her side, once the matter came out into the open, but it would have to be a woman of considerable character or one deeply in love with someone else, to resist the manifold pressures which could be brought to bear on her at home if her father decided that she should marry someone not of her choice.

If she is in love with someone else, she can either run off to his house or elope with him, but for the girl with a deep-rooted dislike of her fiancé pure and simple, there is no alternative but to run away and hide with distant friends until her fiancé's family in exasperation now reclaimed the bride-price cattle. This adjustment would make it safe for her to return but not safe from her father's anger at losing a number of cattle. All in all the freedom of choice is relative as indeed it would be in any society.

The length of the betrothal is usually about a month and during that time the girl limits her outside activities so that the man will not be able to form any bad opinions about her. Between the couple there are only formal relations, reduced to an absolute minimum, which certainly do not include intercourse and going to dances; even if the couple have had regular intercourse before the betrothal and the fact is publicly known, these formalities are still adhered to. In fact, during the engagement, the parents of both the boy and the girl, as well as the engaged couple, will normally

avoid each other and refer to each other only by indirect names. Similarly, a mother-in-law will often refuse to name her daughter-in-law and if she can eventually be persuaded to do so will first look around carefully to avoid being overheard; she will also not mention her son-in-law's name directly until a child has been born, and, conversely, the man will never refer to his mother-in-law by name but always as the daughter of so-and-so.

This avoidance of the man and his mother-in-law is a very noticeable part of the married man's life, and the people themselves say that the wife and her mother are of one flesh and that for the man to use a familiar name to the mother as he does with his wife would be tantamount to an admission of incest between the mother and her son-in-law. Also the man will never under any circumstances sit on his mother-in-law's bed. A latter section will describe a stylised game at weddings which capitalizes on this point.

Also, should either of the couple be named after a bird, animal or other object, neither of them will use the name of this article but will use other expressions to make their meaning clear; this taboo can have amusing consequences, such as the occasion when a wife, called by a cattle name, of a husband called lion, had a cow taken by a lion during her husband's absence and had to go to the local court and explain what had happened. In the course of the proceedings everything became very tangled.

In the family it is customary for the elder son to get married first and until he has done so the younger sons will not be able to persuade their father to provide the necessary cattle for their bride-price. Normally, it is the responsibility of the father to abide by the choice of his son and to provide the amount of bride-price cattle that is later agreed upon. However, a father would be in the right should he refuse to give bride-price cattle on behalf of a son who has been continually disobedient in the home and has not helped with the cultivation or who has struck or sworn at him, or, finally, if the girl is genuinely unsuitable on the grounds of consanguinity or some physical defect. In such a case the man would find himself in a very poor position because he would be unable to obtain help from any of his relatives and would have to find the bride-price himself. This liability is a very cogent reason for at least some show of discipline at home.

A man cannot be compelled to marry a particular girl but even in these days he might ask his father to look for a really suitable girl if he had none in mind and would abide by his decision; however, it was more common in the past for the father to use compulsion on his son than nowadays when so many of the ancient restraints have vanished. Alternatively, the father might indicate in which family his son should choose a wife so that a thoroughly suitable alliance might be formed.

There is definitely no preliminary period of courtship other than the two formal preliminary visits in which there is little personal contact, and indeed, it may well be the case that at the time of the wedding the betrothed couple are in reality complete strangers. Soon after the betrothal two elders *(babuji ba winga* or *batwaji ba sing'wanda)* from the boy's father come to the girl's family to enquire for details of what has occurred and to get a date for the bride-price meeting. There are very few unmarried men and the position of a bachelor is in theory inferior so that even if the unmarried man is middle-aged he would still be referred to as a young, unmarried man. An unmarried man *(kitatola)* is an object of much amusement if there is no apparent reason for his condition, and a good deal of malice in the gossip of the neighbourhood if there is some physical incapacity.

A leper would not be likely to find a wife, nor would an impotent (*nebu*) or sterile man (*ngumba*), both of which conditions would become common knowledge of the community long before the normal time for the sufferer to think of marrying. An albino (*mbuling'wilu*) would also have difficulty in finding a wife as it is said that their children are always sickly. There is another class of unmarried men (*ndoshi*) who have some psychological reason for avoiding women, and a case was quoted in which a man had married normally but had been so shocked by his wife's first menstruation that he had left her at once and had never gone near a woman again.

Among women, however, there are reported to be none who have pathological reasons for avoiding marriage and indeed, in the past, had such a woman appeared, her father would have done his best to beat the idea out of her at its first manifestation. By and large, apart from aged widows, there are no unmarried women except lepers and albinos. A few women have their marriages delayed because there is some physical obstruction in the vagina which is usually dealt with surgically, and others whose vaginas are too small for the proper consummation of the wedding (*nzila mhine*) for which the cure is erosive herbal medicines. No examples could be quoted of women, other than the above, who were unmarried.

There are no known preferences for clans or tribes in which a wife should be chosen and there are no restrictions on wives from hostile tribes such as the Masai, should opportunity arise, or from the same clan. Figures for 116 marriages show no less than 16 marriages in which the man and wife are from the same clan and a further 27 in which wives had been taken from outside the Sukuma tribe. Also, there are no preferences for the localities in which a man must find his wife and he is just as likely to find her next door as in the next chiefdom. Figures from the same series of marriages showed that 21, or 17 per cent, took their wives from the same village; 16, or 14 per cent, from the same parish, but outside their own village; 46, or 40 per cent from another parish in the same chiefdom; 16, or 14 per cent from another chiefdom in the same district; and, finally, 17, or 15 per cent, from another district.

The question of a woman's likes and dislikes for a husband has not been discovered, and indeed their preferences, if any, have never received any social recognition.

4. MARRIAGE AFTER SUDDEN BETROTHAL (KUGUMILA)

This custom is now recorded only among the older generation, a number of whom used it in their youth when they married, but with the younger men the word, *kugumila* is either not known or is confused with that for a normal betrothal.

A man would throw a cloth or some other small article over a girl in public at a dance or elsewhere as a sign of intention to marry her. The custom was free from bad inferences and was a form of advance booking by someone who was suddenly stricken by love or who hoped to bring a love affair to a formal conclusion. A girl over whom something had been thrown, would not look to see who had done it but would shake the article off at once to show that it was not a private arrangement between the pair of them; her friends, looking on, would pick up the article and take it to the girl's mother telling her the name of the suitor. The family would then wait for the opening of the normal betrothal procedure. Other elders held the view that this was the more or less normal way in the past of opening the betrothal proceedings and this may be accounted for by the fact that not so long ago each small group of houses was isolated and did not offer much selection in the way of prospective brides so that when a dance did take place and a large number of comparative strangers attended, the young men would naturally try to make the most of the opportunity to get hold of any attractive girls who caught their eye.

5. BRIDE-PRICE

Bride-price is the one permanent factor present, or anticipated, in all forms of marriage and it forms a very important part in the economic life of the community in which there is a constant movement of cattle because of marriages. In the 116 marriages studied as a part of this survey, 86 fathers were prepared to pay between 13 and 15 head of cattle so that their sons could get married. This represents a considerable outlay of cattle as their herds are not usually large.

The discussion over the bride-price (*wikwisha*) takes place in the house of the man's father and is obviously an event of greater importance both to the families themselves and to the community in general than the wedding itself, which is really only attended by a limited number of young friends of the bride and groom. For this discussion four elders (*bakombe ba winga* or *bakombe ba shikanija*) appear for each party as well as two minor village officials (*basumba batale*) who are the witnesses of the community to the settlement reached and thus prevent unnecessary disputes; however, one man, who must be of a senior grade (*mgogo*), acts on each side as the spokesman (*mkwisha, namhala wa jikajo* or *ntongeji*) and leads the bargaining up to the final stages.

Fathers do not usually take part in bride-price bargaining as they would feel demeaned by such public arguments between the heads of two families between which a marriage is intended, apart from the fact that it would most likely bring about a good deal of enmity. However, they may attend the discussions and when the leaders have nearly reached agreement, they take over the bargaining and reach agreement between themselves.

These men do not wear any special clothes but probably the leaders as well as some of the others will carry their ceremonial fly whisks *(sing'wanda)* which must add an air of formality to their deliberations. Apart from the deliberations there is a formal feast in which a goat (*mbuli ya bukombe*) is cooked and eaten. The goat is killed early in the day and must be skinned by an old man, and no part of the carcass is allowed to be thrown away. In the distribution of the meat there are deviations of custom not only between chiefdoms but even between neighbouring parishes (*gunguli*); some of the ribs (*mbazu*) are cooked at once and given to the elders of the man's side for eating before the girl's party arrives; elsewhere the testicles (*mabolo*) and the lower bowel (*bula*) is given to the young boys; the back (*ngongo*), one foreleg (*kono*), and stomach (*nghumbi*) are given to the old women (*bagikulu*) of the man's family; one side of the head (*ntwe*) and both the haunches (*madako*) are given to the elders of the man's side; and the other half of the head, both back legs (*kulumbu*) and cheeks (*masaiya*), as well as the ribs, go to the elders of the girl's side. Elsewhere the head goes to the father of the groom along with the tongue, throat and lungs (*lulimi, nhingo, mabupu*).

There is always a man (*nisha*), literally 'one who feeds', detailed to entertain the guests, and he also cooks the food for the feast. When he sees the girl's party approach the compound, he will go out to greet them, taking their sticks and ushering them into the compound to the house set aside for the entertainment of such guests.

On their arrival they will be given a small meal of greeting (*wicha milanga*), literally 'that which takes or puts down slaves', to take the edge off their hunger while the main meal (*bukombe*) is being prepared, and the first part of a ritual song will be sung by the women of the household.

Sumbilili kiyuniza, mayu fuma ulole bageni,
Benha shilili, iihi, huyu tulola bageni,
Bageni bitono.

Go to meet the guests, mother, go to look at the guests,
They bring animals that will eat our crops, ooo, while we look at the guests,
Guests worthy of a gift of meat.

Then the guest-entertainer will bring a bowl of water and a bundle of leaves of two trees (*nghubu – Markhamia obtusifolia*) and (*male – Loncho-carpus eriocalyx*) for washing and drying the hands of the guests before eating. The pots with the goats flesh are then brought in and the leader of the girl's party will divide up the meat formally, and from the parts remaining gives an additional portion to the man's elders. The girl's party then eats with the guest-entertainer, while the man's party eats elsewhere in the compound. After they have eaten they wash their hands again and dry them on the same leaves, whereupon the guest-entertainer takes their stools and places them outside the house where the mother of the groom usually sleeps.

Nothing is usually known about the bride-price required until the actual bargaining.

Normally a high bride-price would be paid for

a girl of good appearance who is known to behave well and to be a good worker, and who comes from a rich family. Conversely, a low bride-price would be forthcoming for a woman coming from a poor family, who may be lazy or old, or who has relatives suffering from leprosy or other dreaded diseases. In eastern Sukuma a woman with an illegitimate child is reported to be difficult to marry off, but in this area there is comparatively little difficulty.

In the past, a young man would have been prevented by taboos (*migilo*) from marrying into the families of potters (*babumbi*) or smiths (*basuji*), or from marrying a girl who already has had a male child, or who was born feet first (*kashinje*), or whose top teeth grew before any on the lower jaw (*kwisamula mine ga kwigulya*), but these taboos have almost disappeared now. The old taboos against marrying a girl with a cataract (*mbelabela*) or with a squint *(mahenge)* still survive, probably more through aesthetics than anything else. Generally speaking, taboos are not a major feature of life with these people and their superstitions are much less developed than with other tribes.

The bride-price discussion usually starts in the afternoon and may go on for some hours. The leader of the girl's party usually starts by quoting a bride-price that is well over double that which they might expect to receive. The leader of the man's party counters by offering a ridiculously low price. These two leaders then gradually reduce their differences one by one, with much bargaining and discussion, until they have nearly reached agreement when all the elders join in for the finale.

The bride-price bargaining starts by the boy's party saying two or three times that they have come about a wedding (*nghana, nghana witoji*), which the girl's party answer each time with a heavy hissing grunt (*kuzunya*), whereupon the women of the household trill for joy (*kutola nghundu*). There is then an exchange of greetings between the two leaders in which each discloses his clan, and the bargaining then begins. The girl is first referred to as a hoe in the Usega area, and they ask whether the hoe is new, denoting her apparent virginity, or for how long and how many times it has been used, to denote previous marriages and children born to the woman. In the Usagara area, however, the leader of the man's party starts straight away by saying that they will pay one new hoe (*ichimu* – the normal word for a spear), representing a cow that has not yet calved, and one much used hoe (*lyela*), denoting a bull. In the discussion the girl's leader will put down a series of sticks representing the number of cattle that they want for the girl, of which the man's party will remove a few saying that these have been taken by lions and hyaenas. The former will then return some of these saying that this was not true as only a few had been taken, and so the bargaining goes on.

Included in the bride-price is a bull (*ng'ombe ya Ngongo* or *ng'ombe ya luwako*) which the father of the girl, if he is particularly pleased with the marriage, may give to her mother as a present with which she may do as she wishes. In the past, a cow, and nowadays a goat (*mbuli ya lushu*) – although the custom is dying out – is included in the bride-price to allow the receiver to kill and eat any of the cattle that fall sick or die. Without this gift the meat would, at least in the past, have had to be returned or left uneaten.

Also included in the bride-price when they are driven off, is the goat of happiness (*mbuli ya kitalonhundu*) at the sight of which there is much excitement amongst the women of the girl's family. This animal is the property of the girl's mother. This goat is not always present. There may also be a goat (*mbuli ya kilezu*), literally 'the goat of the beard', which goes to the girl's grandfather as compensation for the loss of his grand-daughter. Also another goat (*mbuli ya kuswagila*) is included as a guide to the cattle on their journey to the bride's father, but this gift is dying out and is replaced by a small cash payment. If the man's father has not enough cattle to make up the agreed bride-price he may be allowed, with the agreement of the girl's father, to make up the total with goats (*mbuli ya mu magulu ga ng'ombe*) in the ratio of one male goat and four females to every head of cattle. The bride-price cattle can be returned even after they have reached the compound of the girl's father, if the father was not present at the agreement and considers that they are unsuitable because they are sick or barren or poor milk

producers. These cattle are returned (*kushosha ya bukwi*) for exchange for cattle more to his liking, or in the event of the girl changing her mind (*kusowa*).

If any of the bride-price cattle which are accepted are immature, they can be left at the groom's house until they reach maturity (*jamenghilwe duhu jitajile*). If none of the cattle shown to the girl's elders are suitable, they will be refused and the elders return empty-handed from a fruitless errand (*bakombe bataswagile*).

Once the bride-price agreement has been reached, the elders prepare to leave without having another meal, and the bride-price cattle are handed over (*jaswaga gwa bobuliho* or *jaswaga gwa bakombe*) to the girl's party for driving home.

When the bride-price cattle leave the compound on their journey to the girl's house, water is thrown over them (*kushitila minzi*), and if there is a cow going which is suckling a calf, one of the women rubs a little ghee on its forehead (*kubilwa maguta ga ngombe*), and if there is no such cow, the fattest and most fertile looking is anointed in this way. As soon as this has been done, the girl's party driving the cattle smear ghee over their hair and foreheads (*kubilwa maguta ga ng'ombe*) and the cattle are driven off, accompanied for some of the way (*kushindikila*) by the womenfolk who again trill with excitement, singing a song which appears to be formalized in its wording:

Kubyala, mayu, kubyala kwa wiza.
Busungu bunidima dilu halemelwa nu kwigasha.
Mayu kanidime nabyale ng'wana wa.
Nshike ng'wichane, buluma nghunu na migongo.
Ng'wana wa nshike ng'wichane, ng'wana wa nshike ng'wichane,
Buluma nghunu na migongo.

To give birth, mother, to give birth is good.
The birth-pains hurt me in the morning and I could not sit down.
Mother hold me and let me bring forth a child.
Daughter of my fellow woman, daughter of my fellow woman.
It is hurting me in the loins and back.

When the cattle get near to the compound of the girl's family, the womenfolk come out to greet them trilling for joy and singing another verse of the formalized song of bride-price cattle, and water is again splashed over their backs. If the two families live near to each other the women from the man's household will accompany the cattle all the way, singing a further verse of the song:

Kung'wa nyalili, iihi, mayu kung'wa nyamagugu,
Namaguta gaho gatibilagwa.

They will not provide even water, ooo, mother, indeed not a single thing,
Not even the fat to anoint ourselves and the cattle.

Likisembo lili aha likisembo kalituli,
Nilikima tulimanile na bolo walyo tulimanile.

A bad reputation is here, where we are,
We know the woman and we know her laziness.

After the successful completion of the bride-price negotiations, the elders from the girl's family are entitled to some compensation (*luswagilo*) for the time and energy that they have expended in reaching a profitable conclusion; this payment used to be a goat or a hoe but has changed in most cases now to a small gift of money.

In some chiefdoms the cattle are not driven away on the same day as the agreement, or it may be too far for the journey to be made in the late evening, so the elders come again at a later date to collect the cattle, for which task they are given a present (*itumbati*) of a ball or two of tobacco or a shilling or two.

The payment of bride-price (*kukwa* – verb, or *bukwi* – noun) is not a definite sign that the marriage will actually take place. The unpaid part of the bride-price (*magasa* or *bugasa*) is a feature of married life which, even among the Sukuma themselves, has taken on much the character of a music-hall joke and elderly men who could easily complete their payments make no attempt to do so. In the marriages covered only 29, or 25 per cent, had completed paying the bride-price agreed upon, and out of the 1499 cattle which should have been transferred for the marriages, 452 head, or 30 per cent, remained unpaid at the time of writing.

This may seem a considerable economic burden which might well be cured by the imposition of bride-price limitation but in actual fact the married man and his father-in-law are content to let the debt remain as for both of them it ensures help in time of trouble and not too much independence, because as long as the debt remains the father-in-law holds the ascendancy over a son who might otherwise not be attentive to his family duties.

After the initial part of the bride-price has been handed over, the remainder can be driven over (*kufunya magasa*) to the girl's father with no additional ceremony or singing, except that a few of the elders who were present when the first part of the bride-price was handed over, will be called in as witnesses to the completion of the transaction. If, however, some of the bride-price remains unpaid and the girl dies, then a cow (*ng'ombe ya lina*) is paid over to close the account and to fill in the grave.

(*To be concluded.*)

BOOK REVIEW

Africa To-day. C. J. Haines. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore; Oxford University Press, London; 1955). 510 pp. $ 6·00.

A number of American universities are now paying special attention to African studies, among them North-Western, Boston, California, Yale, and Columbia. This book embodies the 42 papers read at a "conference on contemporary Africa" held in Baltimore last year through the initiative of Johns Hopkins University. The contributors were drawn from every field of activity – an admiral rubs shoulders with an anthropologist, a governor with a geographer, an economist with an engineer. These contacts can be fruitful provided that some plan, some unifying thread holds the conference together so that the variety of experts share enough of a common idiom to appreciate one another's merits and limitations. This necessary element is lacking here. There is a tendency in some parts of the United States to pull into a conference any visitor from Africa who happens to be at hand. The stranger instantly becomes an "expert" by reason of long residence in one area or another. Yet familiarity is not the same thing as knowledge. A man who has spent hours in a closed room does not feel its temperature as truly as a newcomer. The level of these papers fluctuates. Mr. James Coleman on the growth of political parties, Professor Franklin Frazier on urbanization, Dr. G. W. Carpenter on Islam and Christianity, have something to say that is fresh with insight. But most of the papers re-hash British materials that are best read in the original sources. Americans will make significant contributions to our knowledge of Africa only to the extent that they strike out new paths through its jungles, leaving the well-trodden tracks to the timid and the reticent who are always with us.

J.L.

THE BURIAL BIRD FOR AN OKÚKU

M. D. W. JEFFREYS

THE FOLLOWING information and material, the latter now in the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford, was given to me by old Udɔ Idioŋ Ntukidem of the Okanafun clan at his village of Ikot Oku Usuŋ in September 1926. The Okanafun group of villages belong to the Anaŋ division of the Ibibio. They lie on the right bank of the Kwa-Ibo river in the Abak district of the Calabar Province, Southern Nigeria.

He was an *okuku*, a title given to the spiritual or priestly head of a lineage, and also a member of the Idioŋ society. However, his funeral equipment was that of an *okuku*, and consisted of:

(a) An *ŋkaraŋ oboŋ*, God's razor, which is the name given to a swallow. This bird is very difficult to capture and it is customary for such men to have such a bird stored away in readiness for the day of death. The swallow, when captured, is dried, smoked and kept in readiness. Hence his ability to hand it over to me.

(b) An *ufok edino*, nest of the *edino*. This is a bird's nest and looks like a chemist's retort. I suspect it to be the nest of one of the sun-birds.

(c) An *odoŋ*, coarse matting made from palm leaves. This same type of matting is found as a screen before *idioŋ* shrines, in *ekpo* squares and tied round the trunks of *ndem*, i.e. life giving trees. Until these things are available a dead *okuku* may not be buried. This old man sent me his funeral amulets and in addition an *iba* used in the burial of important women. The *iba* consists of a length of coarse webbing or braid. All these items with the exception of the *odoŋ* are shown in Fig. I.

I shall first dispose of the *iba*.[1] This coarse braid or webbing is about five feet long and two inches wide, and is dyed red. The body of the woman is prepared for burial and the *iba* is then put on. It passes between the thighs and is then brought up round the waist and fixed as shown in Fig. II. This webbing is worn in the same way by living women when they are tabu to men. Thus menstruating women wear an *iba* and so do widows when mourning. They are not supposed to wear any other clothing than the *iba*. However, it is very rare to see a woman so dressed. Only once have I seen such a woman and she came to me to complain that the deceased's family were insisting that she should abide strictly by tribal custom. Usually the *iba* is hidden by a cloth called *ndam*, woven from the white bast of the *Raphia vinerfera* palm and dyed red. However, this *ndam* is being replaced by a European loin cloth though the *iba*[2] is still worn undearneath it. For a widow to die while still wearing her *iba* is a serious matter for the deceased's family. Thus in a civil suit over the pawning of a piece of family land it came out that the widow of the deceased had died while still in mourning. That is to say she died before the *ikpo*[3] had been performed. As a consequence, in order to have the necessary placating sacrifices performed, her son had pledged the deceased's land to raise the money to purchase the required eight goats. One goat, called *obut ikpo isoŋ*, goat of the *Ikpo* of the earth, is killed in the *aŋwa isoŋ* or assembly place for the earth. This goat is slain

[1] The plant from which this webbing is made is called *ofot* and is the plant from which twine and rope is made. I suspect that this plant belongs to the Hibiscus group, and though the fibre in appearance is indistinguishable from that used in making the skull cap known as an *ntinya*, it is not the same and comes from a different plant. I was not able to get the two plants identified.

[2] Other names for this webbing are *ntaŋataŋa*, *ikpaya*, and *udɔ enaŋ*.

[3] *Ikpo*, the induction ceremony into the land of the dead, or second burial, as it is popularly called. She had died before this induction ceremony had been completed, before the ceremony that inducts the *ekpo* or ghost of the dead man into *obio ekpo*, the town of the ghosts.

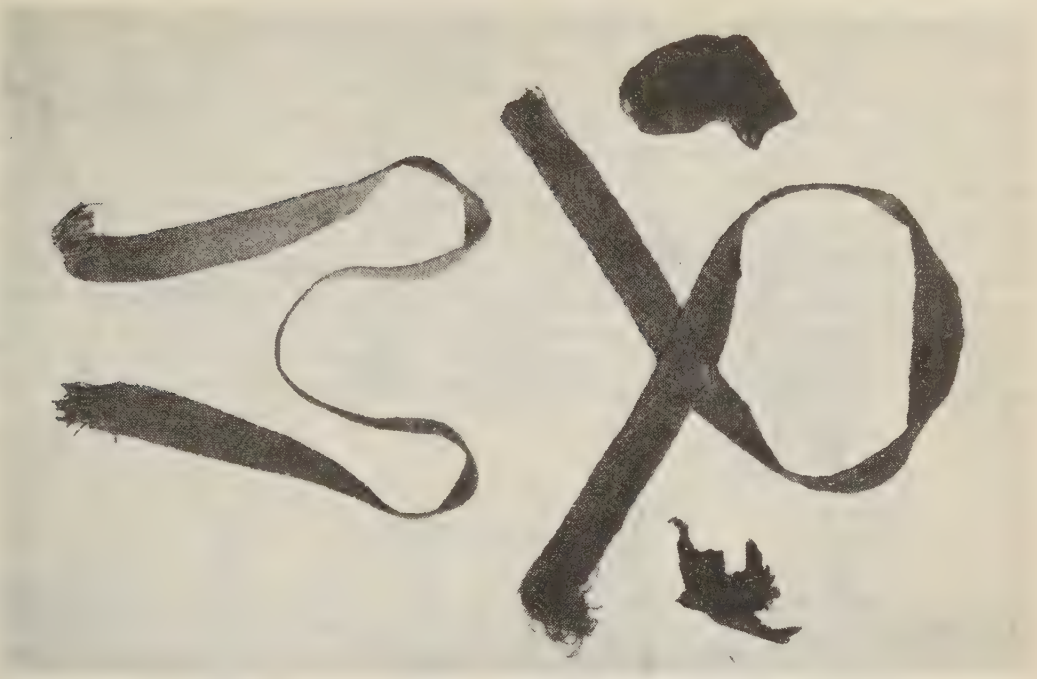

FIG : 1. – Funerary cerements of an okuku : The swallow, sunbird's nest, and *iba*.

to pacify the earth because the *ekpo* or ghost of the widow's husband would be intensely annoyed that a widow of his had died while mourning for him and so would not be present to swell the numbers when his *ikpo* would be performed. His *ekpo* must be placated so that it wreaks no harm on the living. The remaining goats, called *ebut oboŋ*, or goats of chiefs, are then slain and shared out among the elders of the lineage. If these sacrifices are not made the dead widow is left unburied in the house where she died, which is then broken down and dogs are allowed to consume the corpse.

On the death of an *okuku* his body is washed and then rubbed with sweet smelling herbs such as *ntoŋ* (*Ocimum viride*) and *mfaŋ* (*Ocimum americanum*).[1] Then the body is rubbed over with red cam-wood powder. The deceased is now prepared for burial. Round his waist is tied the loin-cloth known as *ndam*. This cloth is dyed red. His *ntinya* or fibre skull-cap, and a sign of status, is placed on his head and then his *idioŋ* ring. A white mark with kaolin is made under each eye, to show that the body is under the protection of the Idioŋ society. A yellow powder - *nsei* - is dabbed on his forehead. To-day the body is dressed in the best European clothes possessed by the deceased and the corpse is then propped up in a chair. The right hand is fixed in an upright position by being tied to the roof of the house in which the corpse is seated. The swallow is now tied to his right hand. If no swallow is available a live chicken often takes its place. In addition there is

[1] J. M. Dalziel in *The Useful Plants of West Tropical Africa*, London, 1937, p. 462, writes : " ... in N. Nigeria they (the leaves) are ... also used to disguise odours, e.g. of fish, or of a corpse not to be buried immediately. A common use is to scent the grave-clothes of the dead (in the absence of more powerful scents such as *Cyprus articulans*) either by rubbing the cloth with the plant or by fumigation."

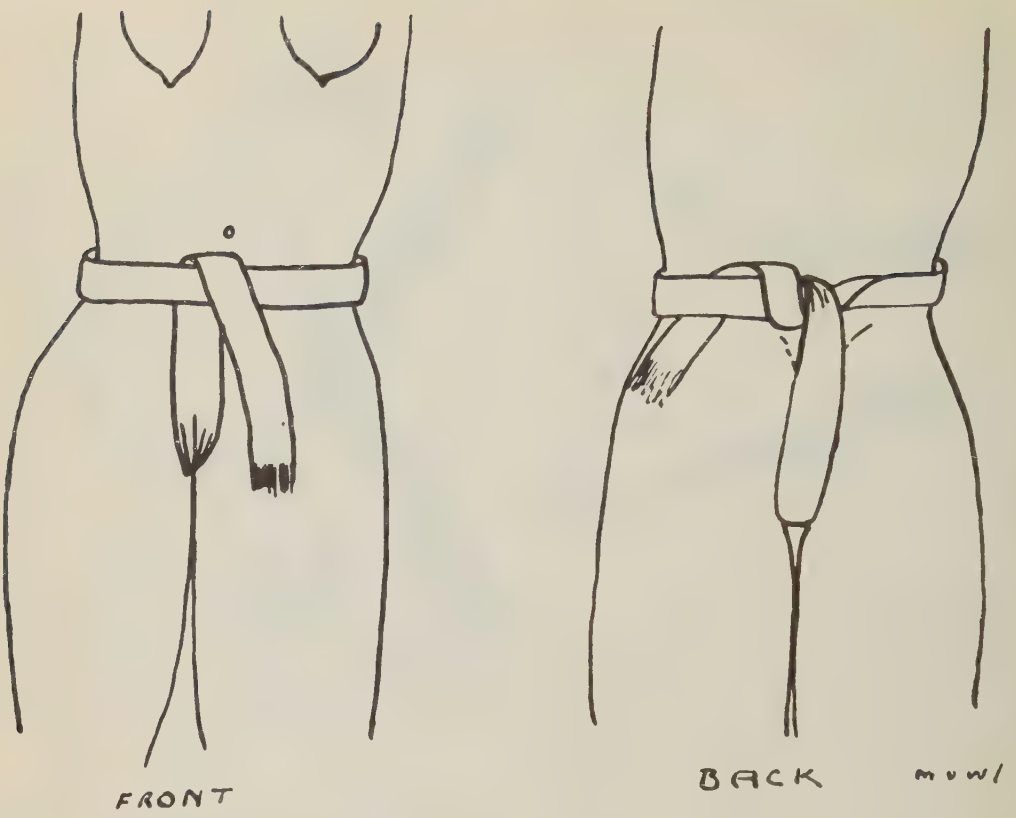

FIG. 2 – How the *iba* is worn.

tied to his right wrist the bird's nest. Then on the right wrist are placed manillas (the local currency in the form of small horse-shoes), as the money which the dead man will need in *obio ekpo*, the city of the dead which is located in the underworld. This money, known as *okpogo ubok udum*, or money for the right hand, is contributed by the near relatives and the amount is unlimited. When no more manillas can be placed on the arm they are placed underneath it and all are buried with the body.

A goat is now slain by having its throat cut and the blood allowed to gush over the deceased's feet. The corpse is then saluted, people visit and pay their respects to it. During the night the deceased's widows watch and wail beside the corpse. The next day it is usually buried in a grave excavated in his own room. The grave is a vertical shaft, dug down about eight feet and then recessed at the bottom. Into this recess the body is placed and the *odoŋ* is wrapped around his head to prevent the earth from touching it. The grave is then filled in.

What is of great interest is the fact that a bird is tied to the dead man's right hand and is buried with him, and that this is one of the essentials without which the deceased may not be buried. It is quite clear that the bird has some part to play in the afterlife and one is reminded of the ancient Egyptian belief that part of the spiritual aspect of a dead man was represented by a swallow. Tying the swallow to the dead man's right hand is

tantamount to turning him into a swallow and in Chap. LXXXVI of the *Book of the Dead*, London, 1949, translated by Sir A. E. Wallis Budge, one finds: "The chapter of making the transformation into a swallow. The overseer of the house of the seal, Nu, triumphant, saith: 'I am a swallow, I am a swallow. . . .' If this chapter be known [by the deceased] he shall come forth by day, he shall not be turned back at any gate in the underworld, and he shall make his transformation into a swallow regularly and continually." Sir James George Frazer in *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Vol. II, London, 1927, p. 110, writes: " . . . in a sepulchre at How (Diospolis Parva) a tamarisk is depicted overshadowing the tomb of Osiris, while a bird is perched among the branches with the significant legend 'the soul of Osiris' . . . "

A single instance of a similarity between the burial custom of an Ibibio priest and that of ancient Egypt proves nothing, but when such an item is found as part of a sun-cult which has *mastaba* tombs [Talbot, P. A.: *Life in Southern Nigeria*, London, 1923, p. 143], a rejuvenation ceremony analogous to the *sed* festival, and the belief that man has a tripartite soul, then coincidence cannot be invoked as the explanation, and more research must be conducted to see if the sun-cult of the Ibibio is but another instance of diffusion.

BOOK REVIEWS

English-Kwanyama Dictionary. G. W. R. Tobias and B. H. C. Turvey. (Witwatersrand University Press, 1954). viii, 200 pp. 20*s*.

This is the first of a new series entitled *Bantu Lexicographical Archives*, published under the general editorship of Prof. C. M. Doke, who contributes a short preface to the book. Kwanyama, also known as Ambo, and closely related to Herero and Ndonga, has hitherto been known to us in some detail only through German works, chiefly those of Hermann Tõnjes, who published both a grammar and a Kwanyama-German dictionary: apart from an English translation of Tõnjes' grammar, made available quite recently, nothing detailed was obtainable in English. Now Bishop Tobias and Rev. Turvey, who both have considerable service and experience in Damaraland behind them, have together given us, through the medium of English, this sizable and entirely new contribution to our knowledge of this as yet not too well-known Bantu language.

The work should be welcome in at least three quarters. For those Africans who speak or at least understand Kwanyama, but whose knowledge of English is still in the elementary stage, it will form a very useful guide to the meanings of the English words and expressions that are translated. It will also render invaluable practical help to those Europeans who, working in an area where Kwanyama or one of its close relatives is spoken, are faced with the task of trying to express English concepts in the local language. Here the authors' evidently broad and deep command of the Kwanyama vocabulary, together with the painstaking and resourceful manner in which they have turned their knowledge to account, will give to many a beginner in the language, and to not a few more advanced students of it, either a direct solution, or at least a fruitful clue towards a solution, of the many conundrums that beset their path in putting English thought into Kwanyama words. The volume should also be of considerable interest and value to all those who, in a more general way, wish to increase their knowledge of the kind of resources available in a Bantu language for the rendering of ideas expressed in a European one: to all such persons, Bishop Tobias and Rev. Turvey have given much food for very stimulating thought.

The present reviewer does not know Kwanyama or any of its sister-langauages, and must therefore refrain from any expression of opinion in detail as to the validity or otherwise of the Kwa-

nyama translations here suggested for the English words and phrases listed. He can but offer a few very general remarks on some of the points that have struck him in reading sample pages of the book. He does so with some realization of the formidable nature of the task that confronts the maker of any dictionary whatever, and of this type of dictionary in particular, and with considerable admiration for the way in which the authors of this one have carried out the task they set themselves.

In regard to the thorny question of what to include in and what to omit from their list of English words and phrases for translation, the authors seem, on the whole, to have followed a sensible middle course. On the one hand, they have not confined that list to such items for which equivalents were known to exist in Kwanyama speech before the impact of Western European ideas upon these African people – a work which would presumably have resulted in little else but an English index to an enlarged edition of Tönjes' dictionary. On the other, they have for the most part excluded from their list English words and phrases the nature of which makes an intelligible and idiomatic rendering into Kwanyama impossible, or virtually so. In this regard perhaps the only fault that occurs to a somewhat disturbing extent in the selections is the inclusion of words and phrases which, though they have a purely literal connotation in the English text that is readily enough put into Kwanyama, yet have also inseparable allusions of context that are not translatable, or at least not translated, into the Bantu language: one thinks here, among rather many, of such cases as *avast* and *avaunt*, with the nautical and archaic associations respectively, apparently completely absent from the suggested Kwanyama renderings.

One notes with pleasure that two things are fairly regular features of this book, as indeed they ought to be absolutely of all such works. One is that, on the whole, when a word has several possible meanings or uses in English, these meanings or uses are briefly specified, and then each is furnished with a suggested Kwanyama equivalent. Another is that – perhaps not nearly as often as might be desirable, though considerations of space have probably been largely responsible for this – the English words or phrases are shown used in a suitable context, and then the whole of the context is put into Kwanyama. This is a specially welcome feature when the word or phrase is used in English in an idiomatic context, the translation of only part of which might at best help little, and at worst lead quite astray. In a future edition of the book, this feature might well be developed a great deal more fully.

Apart from a word of sincere appreciation to the authors for their labours, tribute should be paid to the Morija Printing Works for the very competent printing and binding; to the University of the Witwatersrand for their enterprise in launching the series and in publishing this very acceptable initial volume; and to a number of bodies, among which it is gratifying to note the Ukuanyama Tribal Trust Fund, for their generous financial aid which has made the publication of the book possible. G. P. L.

Politics in a Changing Society. J. A. BARNES. (Oxford University Press for Rhodes-Livingstone Institute ; 1954). 210 pp. 42*s*.

This monograph represents a new venture in African sociology. Dr. Barnes has broken through the fence which, in recent generations, inhibited most British anthropologists against the use of 'history as such'. He has turned the history of a Northern Rhodesian people to the purposes of structural analysis.

The book is "a political history" (Dr. Barnes' own sub-title) of the Ngoni during the past 130 years. It is a political history in two senses : a chronicle of political events, and an analysis of development in political structure. Much of the material under the former head would, one imagines, interest the Ngoni themselves, rather than anyone else. But in the latter aspect Dr. Barnes says much that is stimulating and valuable. All in all he has made a major addition both to our knowledge of a particular people and to our repertory of anthropological 'approaches'.

The Ngoni State was founded in the 1820's by migrants from the areas now known as Swaziland, Natal, and the Transkei ; the name Ngoni is derived from Nguni. During its long march the Ngoni State was enormously swelled by the incorporation of captives, with consequent modifications in social and political structure. For some 75 years the Ngoni remained "successful brigands on the march", better organized for war than any of the peoples who opposed them. This phase ended when – besides other internal and external struggles – the Ngoni found themselves up against Europeans, particularly British and Portuguese. Defeat in 1898 brought the Ngoni State to an end. Since then the political life of the Ngoni has been conditioned by European supremacy : names and symbols remain, but with changed significance.

Dr. Barnes aims at telling us everything that we should like to know about the structural changes of Ngoni polity during these vicissitudes of political fortune. In several sections of the book he gives us first-rate sociological reading. For example: the comparison of lineage systems and analysis of "continually segmenting systems" will clear the air for everybody. The account of structural changes connected with the assimilation of captives illuminates processes which we may perhaps have known of or guessed at, but had not been so clearly and plausibly explained. Dr. Barnes is also very good on the transformations due to European domination.

As regards later Ngoni history (since European domination was established), Dr. Barnes claims, with reason, that "what is unique and non-repetitive for the Ngoni may be repetitive in a wider context". On the other hand, especially where he deals with earlier history, some of his particulars remain obstinately particular. Not all the sow's ears of tribal history will be made into silk purses – the more so because the history itself too often remains uncertain, in spite of gallant attempts to sift and collate all possible evidence. It must be said that a good deal of the historical narrative makes tedious reading.

Politics in a changing society, then, is an important work though by no means a flawless one. Where Dr. Barnes succeeds, he succeeds admirably ; where he fails, it is often because the material was too thin for the method. We are grateful for the successful parts of the book : the partial failures can be accepted as incidental to a new technique.

PHILIP MAYER

Zulu Proverbs. C. L. S. NYEMBEZI. (Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg ; 1954). 238 pp. 14*s*.

I have read with real interest this work by Prof. Nyembezi, who has proved himself an expert on the subject of his study, viz. Bantu proverbs, and more especially Zulu proverbs. Incidentally, they include aphorisms, idioms, metaphors, etc., and many are connected with folk-tales, mythology and history.

The main value of *Zulu Proverbs* lies not so much in the great amount of material collected, the large number of proverbs listed and dealt with, but rather in the method of treatment employed and the classification followed (Chap. V). Hitherto no particular system of classification – apart from an alphabetical arrangement – has been used in publications treating of Bantu proverbs.

Furthermore this work signifies progress in that the author has made a really valuable contribution concerning the interesting though puzzling question of the origin and development of Zulu proverbs; his clarifications are particularly valuable. In this connection the writer, amusingly, remarks : "Many a time I have approached an old Zulu and asked for an explanation of the origin of certain proverbs. The answer generally is, 'My child, that is the way we speak, and that is the way we have always spoken. . . '"

The author's discussion of *form and technique* (Chap. II) and *rhythm in proverbs* (Chap. III) also merits special attention.

There are some instances which call for mild criticism. There is, for example, a tendency to dilate unnecessarily, to supply information and discuss matters which are more or less irrelevant

(as in Chap. I, especially the section dealing with Zulu mythology). Furthermore, I cannot agree with some of the writer's statements in regard to vowel elision and "form and technique"; see p. 14, p. 16 (the two examples concerning the noun class 2), p. 20 ("The following negative forms do not prefix *aku–*, but..."). And are some of the sub-groupings justified (see especially pp. 29 and 30)? Somewhat naive are explanations such as some given on p. 40 ("There is the Zulu idiom, *Ukunqum' ulimi*...") and some on pp. 42 and 43.

Nyembezi deserves our sincere appreciation and congratulations for this valuable work, without which no serious student of Bantu should be. He has undoubtedly blazed the trail for prospective research workers in the field of Bantu proverbs.

B. I. C. VAN EEDEN.

Black Moses. E. D. CRONON. (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison; 1955). 278 pp. $5.

The name of Marcus Garvey is all but forgotten by the world to-day. It surprises one to find that he died as late as 1940. This colourful figure was in his hey-day in the nineteen-twenties when he was proclaiming to enthusiastic crowds of American Negroes the heady slogan of "Africa for the Africans." To make their return to Africa easy, Garvey organized a Black Star Line of ships. A couple of them actually set sail not for Africa but for the West Indies, but the line became a money-collecting racket that ultimately landed Garvey in prison for fraud.

Mr. Cronon tells the whole story admirably in a tone of not uncritical sympathy. It was well worth telling for the light it casts on weaknesses familiar to those who study African nationalism. This Jamaican, working among Negroes, built up an organization on the shaky foundations of emotion rather than efficiency. He and his staff were soon torn apart by personal jealousies and distrust. There was much overt display of uniforms and colours and academic robes. There are large, thrilling meetings and grandiose plans are unfolded in big talk. And in a few years' time the whole house of cards has collapsed, leaving little but wistful memories and a few wounds. The story has been paralleled in a dozen different places in the recent history of Africa. Perhaps the psychologists should think of telling us what tangle of emotions lies beneath it.

J. L.

Social Anthropology in Melanesia. A. P. ELKIN. (Oxford U. P.; 1953). xiii, 166 pp., maps. 27*s.* 6*d.*

The title of this monograph is misleading. There is practically no social anthropology in the book. *A Blue Print for Social Anthropological Research in Melanesia* would be a more accurate title. The sub-title, *A Review of Research*, is more accurate. The book is divided into three parts. Part I deals with the types of ethnographical Record and Research up to 1950. Part II is a survey of anthropological knowledge of the region, with suggestions for research projects. A comprehensive bibliography is then given of material relevant to this region. What is impressive is the number of unexplored regions awaiting investigation.

Part III discusses the principles of a plan of anthropological research in Melanesia, related to native welfare and development. Then there is a chapter on representative sampling, and finally there is a classification of research projects. The monograph is clearly meant as a guide to the South Pacific Commission, enabling them to consider the priority of projects, the data at present available, and the ways and means of dealing with research in these projects. The monograph is a survey of the region showing what research has been done, the value of it, what research remains to be done, and the best way of commencing the new researches. The book contains a valuable bibliography, which unfortunately is scattered through the text instead of being concentrated at the end where it would be so much more valuable for anyone working on Melanesia.

One finds Professor Elkin claiming for anthropology that there are "ascertainable laws" (p. 17).

Quite a number of anthropologists continue to make these vague claims. I had occasion to remark on this uncertainty of ascertainable laws in *Man*, No. 150, 1951. (Why not enunciate a couple of these ascertainable laws and let us see if they are laws ?) On the other hand, one notices gladly the emphasis on the historical approach whereby he insists (p. 16) that anthropological work "should be carried out by persons trained in both anthropological and historical methods." Such research gains depth and weight as a consequence.

Professor Elkin stresses the need (p. 139) for the Social Anthropologist to learn the language of the people studied and to give not only an anthropological survey but also a linguistic survey. He also stresses the need (p. 142) to understand and appreciate the social psychology and sociology proper of the people studied and to respect their attitudes, values, aspirations and reactions.

On p. 149 there is a discontinuity between lines 17 and 18. The sense does not follow on. It seems that a line or a paragraph has been omitted

There is for South Africa a very interesting observation on the effect on the social structure of a society by the recruiting of its males for the labour market : ". . . the absence of men for so long meant that they were not being fathers, quite apart from the fact that the women betrothed or married to them frequently made other liaisons. This was an attack on the social structure ; the family positions were not being filled in the customary manner, and enough persons not born to maintain the structural positions. For such a people there can be no future." (p. 150.) It seems then that the total apartheid policy of South Africa will ultimately ensure a future for the Bantu. But is Professor Elkin correct ? When he says for such a people there can be no future, surely he is wrong : What would be correct is to say "for such a *culture* there is no future", but to confuse a people with a culture is to make a very elementary mistake.

M. D. W. JEFFREYS.

Social Anthropology in Polynesia. F. M. KEESING. (Oxford U. P. ; 1953). x, 126 pp., maps. 27*s*. 6*d*.

The title of this monograph, like that of its companion one, *Social Anthropology in Melanesia* by Professor Elkin, is misleading. There is practically no social anthropology in the book. *A Blue Print for Social Anthropological Research in Polynesia* would be a more accurate title. The sub-title is more accurate: *A Review of Research.* More than half the book, pp. 68–126, is devoted to the select bibliography wherein items are marked with either two asterisks, or only one, or none at all, as a guide. Two asterisks indicate a reference of major significance; one asterisk indicates a reference of some importance; and an absence of an asterisk indicates a reference that is marginal to social anthropology (p. 69). . . a very useful guide.

This monograph is published under the auspices of the South Pacific Commission for general information. "The study forms one unit of a research project initiated by the South Pacific Commission as part of its Social Development research programme. The project was set up to provide a comprehensive survey of the work done to date in social anthropology . . . among the peoples of the South Pacific territories, and to suggest lines for future research. . . " On this scheme one reads that "the Commission's conclusions upon the various recommendations will be announced shortly."

Professor Keesing, as can be seen from the table of contents, lays less stress on social anthropology pure and simple and roams over a wider field. Chapter II deals with economic development, Chapter III with social development, Chapter IV with health, and the last discusses research needs and possibilities. Under each chapter is discussed in detail what researches have been done and what remains to be done, and then suggestions are offered as to how these researches can best be undertaken. Chapter V is a tabulation of specific problems that await investigation. These problems are considered from the point of view of an anthropologist working alone or from that of a team. According to whether

they should be tackled by one man or by a team the problems are given priorities.

M. D. W. JEFFREYS.

Lipshamathe. B. M. KHAKETLA. (Afrikaanse Pers Boekhandel ; 1954). xxxviii, 98 pp. 7*s*.

This is a book of poems, but there is a long preface in which the author sets out his ideas on poetry and reviews all attempts that have been made at writing poetry in Southern Sotho. The result is not satisfactory. One feels that the author's ideas are based primarily on English poetry. Thus he is unable to find "smooth rhythm" in the praise-poems. He quotes lines from Bereng, but, while admitting their high quality, he declares their beauty incomplete because they lack "rhythm". The same happens to some of George Lerotholi's lines. We are not told what this "rhythm" consists in, but if we are to judge from the few examples that are given, it seems to be found wherever lines are composed of four words each (*word* is here used in the conjunctivist's sense). That kind of rhythm is the exception rather than the rule in Southern Sotho and it is not surprising that the author finds its absence a weakness common to most of the poets. The same remarks apply to the other requirements put forward. The author himself does not carry them out in his poems. Except for the subject-matter, his poems have taken the form of the very praise-poems which he finds deficient in feeling and to a certain extent in rhythm. Nor is this surprising because the form of the praise-poems is an indigenous one that comes most naturally and that has stood the test.

The poems themselves are a praiseworthy attempt, and cover a wide variety of subjects. Some of them are even more personal than the praise-poems, and require notes to explain the many names and incidents, as these are known only to the author and his friends. To other people they are bound to be as obscure as similar allusions in the praise-poems. Notes are also necessary to explain other passages. This is a difficulty of the author's own making. His belief that poetic language must be very different from ordinary everyday language has led to an obvious conscious search for unusual words. Some of these border on the archaic, even if they demonstrate the wealth of vocabulary that the author commands.

This book is full of promise especially if the author, in his future attempts, can rid himself of some of the ideas expressed in his preface and just rely on his instinctive feeling for what is good Sotho poetry. That he has that feeling this book has clearly shown.

S. M. M.

Sekhukhuni se bonoa ke sebatalali. MACKENZIE NTSALA. (S. A. Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg; 1954). 51 pp. 2*s*. 6*d*.

Two men, Pitsa and Senare, murder a certain Ramafa very early one morning. On the same morning Khabeli, returning from a neighbouring village, hears Ramafa's last shout. Koto, Khabeli's cousin, also sees Pitsa and Senare on that same morning. When the murder is discovered, the chief summons a diviner called Nkokoto. He has been bribed by the real murderers and points out Khabeli as the culprit. Everybody is shocked but it seems nothing can save Khabeli from the act of the diviner. His cousin, Koto, convinced that Khabeli is not guilty, disappears and comes back with European constables just before Khabeli's execution. They carry out an investigation and the real murderers are brought to light.

Thrillers have their admirers in any language and, as they are practically unknown in Southern Sotho, this book will be very welcome. The langauage is good, and there are some vivid scenes such as the one in which the diviner points out the murderer. The author has succeeded in eliminating all things that do not contribute to the development of the plot, consequently the story moves rapidly and the reader's interest is captured to the end of the story. Interest in the book is centred solely round the plot, however, to the exclusion of character depiction. Therefore one looks in vain for a name to add to the list of well-defined literary characters that have come

to be favourites among Sotho readers, characters such as Chaka and Khitšane.

S. M. M.

Social Life of the Owikeno Kwakiutl. R. L. Olsen. (University of California Press ; 1954). iv, 42 pp., map, diags. $00. 75.

This monograph is Vol. 14, No. 3, of the University of California's Anthropological Records. The author states that the material presented is an attempt to reconstruct, as far as possible at this late date, something of the social life of the people of the Rivers Inlet and the Owikeno Lake areas, who cannot to-day be called a tribe. The data was collected by interviewing the few remaining oldest inhabitants.

The basic economic culture of these people is that of food-gatherers where the staple protein is fish from the sea. What is of peculiar interest is the change from the habits and economies of the food-gatherer straight into the modern mechanical age, for one reads that these people to-day secure a livelihood chiefly in the fisheries industry. "The men operate their own motor boats or work at the heavier tasks in the canneries ; the women are hired, chiefly at cleaning the fish. . . There is but little hunting or trapping done. . . the rendering of oil has been nearly abandoned. Even the catching and processing of salmon in the old fashion has given way to dependencies on supplies obtained at the stores maintained at the canneries."

One may well ask what effect this sudden change in the way of life of these people has had upon them, and one finds that "here live the half a dozen families who constitute the survivors of a tribe probably numbering over five hundred a century ago. . . . The Koey people are now extinct as a group." Then in 1935 there was a disastrous fire in the main settlement, which destroyed not only the houses but all ceremonial regalia and other treasures and heirlooms. "Only vestiges of the old culture remain and the potlaches, dances and other overt features of the old life survive only in what are mere token observances."

So Mr. Olsen has made a brave attempt to record what little remains of their early culture. What he has recorded shows that the social structure was conciliar, with public opinon as the most powerful sanction. Origins are traced to sky-beings and the four quarter gods repeatedly appear in the form of the mystical number four.

Mr. Olsen is to be congratulated on rescuing the vestiges of a disappearing food-gatherer's culture. His researches may throw some light on what is known as the "hard core" of culture, namely those facets of it that persist to the end as it were.

M. D. W. Jeffreys

Maliro ndi Myambo ya Acewa. (Burial Customs of the Cewa). Archibald J. Makumbi. (Longmans, Green and Co., in association with the Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland Joint Publications Bureau ; Cape Town ; 1955). 60 pp. 2*s*. 9*d*.

The author, himself a member of the Cewa of Nyasaland, gives a brief description of the burial customs of his people. He indicates the various funeral ceremonies pertaining to the death of people of different age and status and also supplies information regarding difference in ceremonies resulting from the specific circumstances of death. He stresses the part played by the various *nyau* dancers and illustrates his material with clear drawings of these masked figures. African readers will find this publication interesting reading and it is also of special significance to social anthropologists. The vernacular used is of a very good standard but the orthography is inconsistent in regard to word-division.

J. P. Bruwer

Kufukula zakale. C. S. S. Higham. (Longmans, Green and Co., in association with the Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland Joint Publications Bureau ; Cape Town ; 1955). 67 pp. 2*s*. 6*d*.

In a concise but illuminating manner the writer tells the story of man's history from prehistoric

times up to the period of the Roman Empire and the invasion of Europe by the Huns. He indicates briefly the main cultural achievements through the ages stressing both material and cultural development. The publication should prove a valuable source of information to African readers in general, but also in schools and projects of mass education. The vernacular used is of a good standard but the orthography is in many cases inconsistent. Excellent drawings and a few maps add to the value of the booklet.

J. P. BRUWER

CORRESPONDENCE

From DR. J. C. DE GRAFT-JOHNSON,
University College of the Gold Coast,
Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies,
P. O. Box 405,
Sekondi.

It has been brought to my notice that Professor M. D. W. Jeffreys has taken exception to a remark which appears on Page 3 of AFRICAN GLORY. The remark complained of reads as follows : "We have quoted enough of Prof. Jeffreys to indicate that here you have the foundations of a *herrenvolk* theory worse than anything ever propagated by Hitler." My remarks are not in fact written of the man at all, but of possible future development of his theories. I therefore take this opportunity to express regret for any implication that seems to reflect on Prof. Jeffreys personally in a passage intended to criticise certain views.

30th March, 1955.